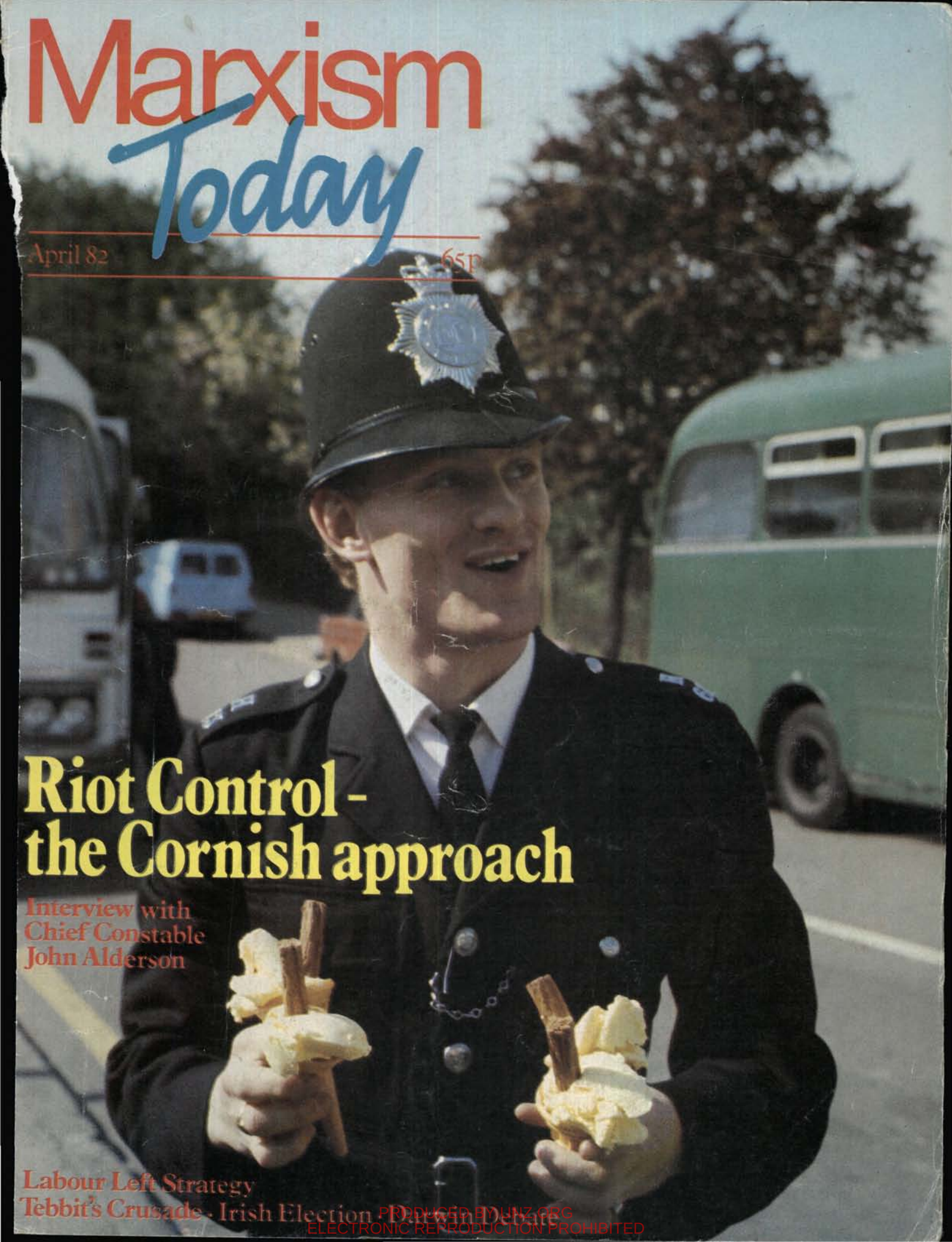
Marxism Today

April 82 65p



Riot Control - the Cornish approach

Interview with Chief Constable John Alderson

Labour Left Strategy
Tebbit's Crusade · Irish Election · Brown Betrayal

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CITIZEN'S THEATRE

Gorbals Glasgow 041 429 0022

5-10 April **Wild Cat 1982**
Their new rock musical about the dangers and effects of nuclear war

12-14 April **ATC in The Tempest**

15-17 ATC in Berlin/Berlin
a musical play about the tension of living in Berlin today

19-24 April **Theatre About Glasgow in Beasts of every land and clime**
based on Animal Farm by George Orwell

All performances at 7.30
All seats at 90p. Students 60p. OAPs and unemployed free.

Thursday 1 April at 1.00 — 2.15 Viennese born novelist **Jakov Lind** talks about his new satire *Travels to the Enu* with poet and critic **Michael Hamburger.**

Tuesday 6 April at 1.00 — 2.15 **Dr. Richard Hoggart** talks with Open University Professor of Literature, **Graham Martin,** about humanistic studies and mass culture to celebrate the publication of *An English Temper.*

Tuesday 20 April at 1.00 — 2.15 Historian and Marxist activist **C.L.R. James** talks to **Lord Fenner Brockway** about Black politics and the Developing World.

Thursday 22 April at 7.30 **Hugh Brody** author of *Maps and Dreams* talks with 'New Left Review' editor **Anthony Barnett** about the rapacious dreams of the white man and the tenacity of the Canadian Beaver hunting economy. Plus première screening of Brody's film made with, and for, the Indians.

Tickets £1.25, bookable in advance.
ICA Day Membership 40p. Box Office 01-930 3647
INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS The Mall London SW1

ICA APRIL TALKS

War on Want is not like most other charities. War on Want seeks to eradicate the *causes* of world poverty, rather than simply treat the symptoms.

That's why when you give money to War on Want, you know it will be used to fund practical and progressive projects and campaigns which get to the root of the problem in Britain and in the Third World.

You can also become a member of War on Want for just £5. Or get your trade union branch to affiliate.

War on Want members take part in policy making, and help decide *who* will benefit.

467 CALEDONIAN ROAD, LONDON, N7 9BE
TELEPHONE 01-609 0211

OXFORD PLAYHOUSE COMPANY

23 MARCH — 3 APRIL

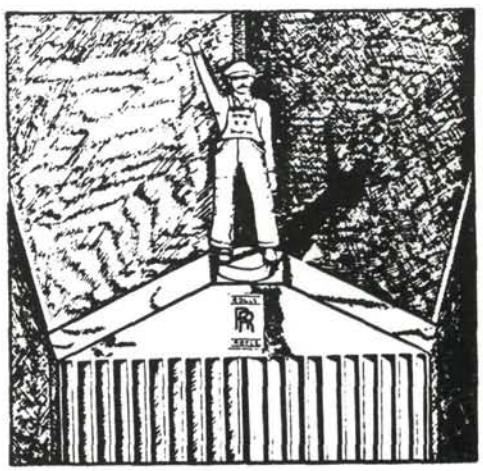
And A Nightingale Sang . . .
by C.P. Taylor

In this affectionate comedy the popular songs of the last war are used to evoke the realism of every day life for a working class Geordie family.

"The play is an unmitigated pleasure" *Daily Express*
"It rocks you back in your seat" *Daily Mail*

The Oxford Playhouse, Beaumont Street, Oxford
Box Office: Oxford (0865) 47133 open 10.00 a.m. — 7.30 p.m.
Credit card bookings welcome.

Robert Wyatt



NOTHING CAN STOP US

LP NOW AVAILABLE
ON ROUGH TRADE RECORDS

SHOP: 202 KENSINGTON PARK RD. W11
WHOLESALE: 137 BLENHEIM CRESCENT W11

ROUGH 35 **01 221 1100**

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marxism Today

Theoretical and discussion journal of the Communist Party

Editorial office
16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY
Telephone 01-251 4406

Editor Martin Jacques

Editorial office Sally Davison

Editorial board
Irene Brennan, Jack Cohen, Dan Connor, John Foster, Jean Gardiner, Eric Hobsbawm, John Hoffman, Alan Hunt, Arnold Kettle, Betty Matthews, Bert Pearce, David Priscott, Bob Rowthorn, Mike Seifert

Focus Peter Higgins, Paul Webster

Channel Five Sally Townsend

Reviews John Kelly

Advertising Tom Lonergan

Circulation Dave Grant

Distribution
Newsagents: Moore Harness Ltd
50 Eagle Wharf Rd, London N1 7ED
Subscriptions and bookshops:
Central Books Ltd, 14 The Leathermarket
London SE1 3ER

Subscription rates for one year
Inland: individuals £7.80, institutions £10.40
Overseas: individuals £10.40, institutions £13.00

The editor welcomes contributions for publication in the journal. Further details if required from the editorial office. Please send SAE if you want an acknowledgement or manuscript returned.

Design Peter Hammarling, Kathryn Tattersall
Typeset by Advantage Filmsetting Ltd
Printed by Farleigh Press Ltd (TU)
Watford, Herts

Cover photo: Barry Lewis/Network

Published by the Communist Party
16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY
© April 1982, world copyright *Marxism Today*

Contents

April 1982 Volume 26 Number 4

Focus 2
Namibia • The Bristol City Eight • Yamal Gas Pipeline • Change on the Ultra-Right

Features

Interview with John Alderson
Policing in the Eighties 8
Last summer's riots have made policing a major political issue. Here John Alderson, the radically minded Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall, discusses the role of the police.

Sam Aaronovitch
Recipe for Defeat 15
The Labour Left have made extraordinary advances in the Labour Party. But is that progress now threatened by the Left's political weaknesses?

Robert M Young
The Darwin Debate 20
The recent Arkansas case renewed the century-old debate on Darwin's theory of evolution. The creationists lost, but the left should not be drawn into blanket support for the scientific establishment.

Christian Tyler
Tebbit's Law: A Tory Dream Come True? 23
The Tories have taken another lunge at the unions. If successful, the consequences for trade unionism would be drastic. The stakes are, indeed, high.

Paul Bew
The Irish Election 29
The result of the recent Irish election was another cliff-hanger. The author looks at the background to the present stalemate in Irish politics.

Channel Five 32
Urban Cowboys — Mary Harron
Reclaiming Fashion — Caroline Holder
The Stuff that Dreams are made of — Kevin Gough-Yates
Snooker — Sheila Capstick

Discussion 37
Geoff Bell **Paisley and Protestant Politics**
The author looks at the position of the Protestants

Reviews 39
Ralph Miliband — The Forward March of Labour Halted?
John Fantham — Triumph of the People. Nicaragua: the Sandinista Revolution
Tess Woodcraft — Girls, Wives, Factory Lives. Women, where are your jobs going?

Notes 44

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FOCUS

NAMIBIA

Many observers of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa felt at one point during the late 1970s that Namibia was nearer to achieving independence than was Zimbabwe: as everybody knows, events proved different. Today, Zimbabwe is indeed independent, while the battle for the freedom of Namibia still continues.

However, it is clear now that no simple chain reaction will ensure that Namibia's independence will soon follow on the heels of that of Zimbabwe. This is mainly because the very outcome of the Zimbabwe elections had provided a harsh lesson for the South African regime. Pretoria fears a similar victory for the liberation movement, in this case the South West Africa People's Organisation — SWAPO — in elections in Namibia; this it is not prepared to swallow.

Ever since the Geneva United Nations conference of January 1980, which was called to settle outstanding issues inhibiting progress towards elections in Namibia, and which was brought to an abrupt end by South Africa's declaration that to proceed would be 'premature', negotiations over Namibia's future have continued rather slowly. Both South Africa and SWAPO have accepted the UN Security Council Resolution 435 (1978) which calls for the holding of fair and free elections in the territory under UN supervision and control. This resolution enshrined the UN plan, which is supposed to be set in motion by the signing of a ceasefire between SWAPO and South African forces.

South Africa's blocking of this process at Geneva happened apparently after that regime had received positive hints that the then American President-elect Ronald Reagan anticipated close relations between the two administrations. Indeed relations between Washington and Pretoria have been greatly strengthened. Since the beginning of 1980 the Washington administration has taken over direct control of the negotiations with the South African regime. South Africa has used this development to their advantage and it is becoming apparent, even to other members of the Western Contact Group[1] that South Africa is treating the reign of the Reagan administration as a period of grace. It knows that it can get away with practically no progress over the Namibian issue without fearing repercussions in the form of international sanctions, because the USA would veto any such move. France and West Germany are increasingly feeling that the South African regime has not got the political will to go through with the UN supervised and controlled elections in Namibia.

The UN plan for Namibia does not define a constitution but merely deals with arrangements for the holding of a fair and free election. It envisages an elected constituent assembly which would be free to then determine Namibia's future direction and to draw up a constitution. At the end of last year the Contact Group presented to SWAPO, the Frontline States, and South Africa what they called constitutional principles designed to act as a framework within which the elected constituent assembly would work: and in fact to allay South African fears prompted by the experience of the constitutional guarantees in Zimbabwe. They included a Bill of Rights, the separation of executive and legislative powers, and reassurances that there would be no appropriation of private property without compensation, and no retroactively enacted criminal offences.

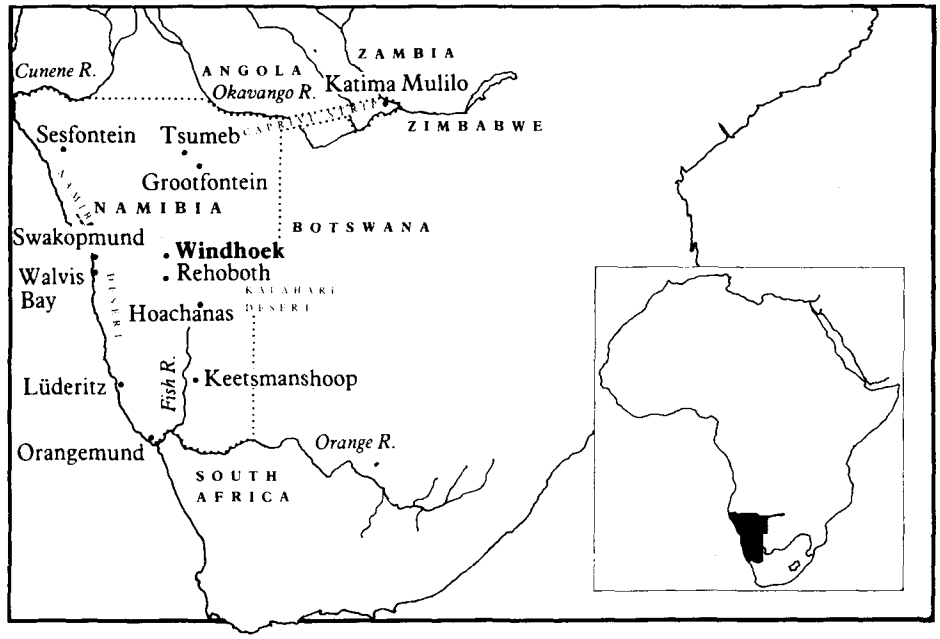
The Contact Group also tried to get SWAPO to agree that an independent Namibia would be neutral, that no organisations hostile to South Africa would be allowed on Namibian soil, and that no foreign troops would be allowed to be called in by an independent government except with UN Security Council approval. These last measures were rejected by SWAPO and by the Frontline States, but the general principles governing the bill of rights, etc, were accepted by SWAPO.

Still part of what has been dubbed Phase 1 of the American initiative, is the unresolved question of what electoral system to use in Namibia. SWAPO and various small regional groupings opposed to South African rule, support proportional representation. The South Africans, on the other hand, want to see single member constituencies. To bridge this division, the Contact Group suggested a complex system whereby 50% of the seats in a constituent assembly would be elected by proportional representation, and 50% through single member constituencies. This is in effect a one man, two votes system. SWAPO and the Frontline States have rejected this as a manipulative and confusing mechanism: the elections are supposed to be organised by South Africa and merely supervised by the UN, and such a system would be open to abuse by South Africa. Moreover, the UN plan as it stands does not provide for the holding of a census, or the drawing up of an electoral roll or of constituency boundaries.

At present this issue of the electoral system remains unresolved. All indications from the Pretoria regime are that it remains intransigent over the matter. Moreover, there are still unresolved issues in the second phase of the negotiations which is due to deal with details of the deployment of the UN Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) — the military and civilian force which will oversee the elections.

Behind the debate over details of an election process lies the cold reality: South Africa is keeping up the image of negotiating with no real intention of proceeding with implementation of the UN plan. Today, Namibia is no nearer the signing of a ceasefire that would herald the elections than it was at the beginning of 1980.

One of the reasons that South Africa is so reluctant to proceed with elections in Namibia is the fact that there is no so-called



[1] A group of Western governments comprising the US, Britain, West Germany, Canada and France.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

political middle ground in Namibia. SWAPO has been extremely successful in mobilising popular support. This has been manifested in the nationwide involvement in SWAPO's campaign, which is conducted on three levels of activity: the political front at home, the international diplomatic campaign, and of course, the armed struggle. SWAPO freedom fighters are tying down over 80,000 South African occupation troops with all their sophisticated military hardware. The South African military have acknowledged that they cannot win an outright military victory over SWAPO. This is what lies behind its hideous twin policies of repression, detention and torture of Namibian opponents to the regime inside the country, and mounting attacks on neighbouring independent African states, especially Angola and Zambia, destroying agriculture and industrial infrastructures, and killing innocent civilians.

The latest development has been South Africa's attempt to 'Namibianise' the conflict. Forced conscription for all Namibians over the age of 16 has meant that Namibians are now being made to engage each other on the battlefield. This has made many thousands flee the country to escape conscription.

As part of their desperate attempt to halt the advance of the liberation struggle, South Africa has created the so-called National Assembly in Namibia, staffed with its few hand-picked ethnically based collaborators in the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA). The objective of this was to present an alternative to SWAPO. Increasingly, South Africa has used the DTA as a mouthpiece through which to delay the elections and procrastinate. However, even this strategy has failed dismally. What small support there might have been for the DTA has disappeared as it has been unable to effect even minor changes in the racist South African controlled system in Namibia. Moreover, even the DTA has its own internal contradictions. The President, Rev Peter Kalangula, resigned in the middle of February, claiming that he no longer supported the ethnic nature of the DTA. He is now making a bid to create a new non-ethnic 'moderate' (ie anti-SWAPO) party. It is safe to speculate that this move has backing from outside South Africa, no doubt including certain Western interests.

It is the combined pressure of political, military and diplomatic action against the South African occupation regime in Namibia that will herald the freedom of that country. This encompasses the continued mobilisation of the Namibian people; intensification of the armed struggle and its increasing demoralising effect on South African white youth — more and more of whom are deserting from the army; and a heightened campaign for the total isolation of South Africa through the mandatory imposition of sanctions. Since Namibians and South Africans face a common enemy their liberation struggles complement each other.

Peter H Katjavivi

THE BRISTOL CITY EIGHT

Unlike most industries, football's industrial relations, and indeed its organisation, cannot be explained simply by capitalist economic laws. One law, though, is proving to apply to football just as much as to any other capitalist industry — that when things go wrong, it is the workers who suffer.

The first people to discover this were the 'Ashton Gate Eight', eight members of Bristol City football club who, as the club's disastrously inept management brought it face to face with liquidation, were left to take the responsibility for maintaining the club in existence. Clubs previously had maintained the inviolability of contracts, and were often to be heard, usually in the form of their chairmen, complaining bitterly about the lack of loyalty in the game.

As Geoff Merrick, the club captain and players' spokesman discovered, loyalty only ran one way. The directors' answer, when the club got into trouble, was to face the players with an ultimatum: either they accept £58,000 to be split among the eight and tore up their contracts worth between £250,000 — £290,000, or the club went into liquidation. For players who had mortgages, families and responsibilities based upon their contracts, it was an impossible situation. Some, like Merrick, had turned down lucrative moves in previous years out of loyalty to the club and a desire to stay with the colleagues they had grown up with. Now they were faced with losing their livelihoods or taking the responsibility for closing the club and costing their other colleagues their jobs too.

Geoff Merrick

Significantly neither the Football League nor the Football Association made any move to help. The Professional Footballers' Association, however, immediately acted in defence of their members. As Gordon Taylor, the PFA secretary remarked 'We couldn't afford to have such a bad settlement, not only for the sake of the players concerned, but for all our other members'.

PFA accountants studied the books, and although the deal that was finally negotiated was far from perfect, they did succeed in rescuing something from the wreckage. Instead of the club going into liquidation, which would have left the players waiting for up to two years before they received a penny, or accepting the 'take it or leave it' offer, the PFA succeeded in protecting the players' contracts. They are now protected along with the other creditors of the old Bristol City Football Club Limited — management has passed into a new company, Bristol City (1982) Ltd — with first claim against the proceeds from a new share issue and from the sale of assets of the old company, the most valuable of which is the grounds and its facilities. A second consequence of that agreement was that at the same time the jobs of other PFA members employed by Bristol City were protected.

It was, perhaps, the best the PFA could get in the circumstances. Yet it is hardly surprising that Geoff Merrick should be left to say bitterly 'loyalty is a complete and utter waste of time. Loyalty is a dirty word'. For during the week's negotiations far from getting the public support they deserved, the players were often treated as the villains of the piece. Merrick's reward for rejecting a move to Arsenal in order to help the club he had supported as a boy reach the first division was public abuse. Some of his colleagues received threatening phone calls. All were treated as if they were holding the club to ransom, rather than the other way round.

In the current economic plight of football, a grossly mismanaged declining industry, their experiences are unlikely to remain unique for long. Although Brian Winston, Orient chairman and one of the more progressive voices on the Football League management committee, admitted that the problems of football stemmed from the top, even he saw little alternative to hammering the players. Interviewed on television, he forecast a 25% redundancy among professionals at the end of the season.

If that is so, then a lot more clubs are going to be trying to tear up players' contracts. For

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the PFA estimate that only around 25-30% of contracts will come up for renewal in the summer. To meet Winston's estimated figures, that would mean virtually all of them would not be offered new contracts. That is unlikely to say the least. For among that group are leading stars, and a large number of good first and second division players, few if any of whom are likely to be given their cards by their clubs.

The alternative will be clubs trying to renege on contracts. The PFA are committed to resisting that, but they will also be facing other threats. Among the suggestions down for discussion at the recent Football League Chairmen's Seminar were proposals to reintroduce the maximum wage and to introduce a limitation on the number of players each club is permitted to employ. Worrying also, the PFA were not invited to send a spokesman to the seminar.

With a short career expectancy and a rough average wage of £175 a week (obviously top first division stars get much more, but a young player on the fringe of a fourth division team may only get £50 a week), footballers are hardly to blame for the economic mess the game finds itself in. The transfer system, a failure to adapt to changing social patterns and a failure to provide either the facilities or the entertainment to attract audiences are more culpable. But the evidence of the Ashton Gate Eight suggests that it will be the players who have to carry the can.

Peter Ball

YAMAL GAS PIPELINE

The construction is about to begin in the USSR of a natural gas pipeline stretching from the desolate wastes of Western Siberia to Western Europe. Called the Yamal pipeline, after the Yamal-Nenetskii region where the USSR's (and the world's) largest gasfields are located, it will carry 40 billion cubic metres a year of gas from the giant Urengoi field to West Germany, France, Italy and a number of other countries. It will be over 5,000 kilometres long, 1.42 metres in diameter, and will cost up to $15 billion to build.

When the idea was first mooted, the Russians hoped that Western banks would cough up a loan of 20 billion deutschemarks for the project. The pipeline would run from the Yamburg field, 200 kilometres to the north of Urengoi, which lies wholly in a continuous permafrost zone requiring radically different engineering for its development. A preliminary agreement was signed by the Russians and a German banking consortium headed by Deutsche Bank for most of the loan, but this was wrecked by rising interest rates and by the Germans getting cold feet over the size of the loan.

A more modest scheme was then devised whereby a loan of 8 billion DM would be made to cover the cost of imported equipment for a much simpler pipeline running from Urengoi. So far, 4.4bn DM has been lent by the Deutsche Bank consortium, and it is likely that Italian banks will lend most of the rest. This money is to be spent mainly on the import of pipe from the Mannesmann and Thyssen Stahlunion steel plants of Germany (an initial contract for 1.2 million tons has just been signed) and 41 compressor stations with 125 heavy duty turbines for pumping the gas along the pipeline. Contracts have been awarded by the Soviet organisation Machinoimport to a German/French consortium of Mannesmann and Creusot Loire for 22 stations and 68 turbines for the eastern half of the line, and to the Italian ENI subsidiary of Nuovo Pignone for 19 stations (57 turbines) for the western half. Nuovo Pignone make their own turbines, but Mannesmann and Creusot Loire have to buy them in, and the Russians nominated AEG-Kanis of Germany to make 47 turbines and John Brown Engineering of Glasgow to make 21. In fact, considering that Britain will neither lend any money nor buy any gas, British firms have done surprisingly well. The John Brown order is worth £104 million, plus a further £43 million for spares, and will keep 1,650 workers occupied for 2 years. Ruston Gas Turbines and Plenty of Newbury have won orders worth £29.7 million and £20 million for compressor station equipment and Rediffusion Computers will supply a computer system for £7.8 million.

The unbroken line marks the new route of the Yamal pipeline. The broken line is the original route and if the Yamal line had followed this, its construction cost would have been lower. The new route has been chosen, however, because it runs through some of the most heavily populated industrial regions of the USSR, whereas more than half of the old route runs through practically uninhabited regions, and if the Western European countries succumb to American pressure and cancel the deal, then the Russians are in a much better position to use the pipeline for their own purposes.

But who needs Yamal gas? So far, orders for 27.2 billion cubic metres a year have been wrapped up, with the West Germans taking 10.5, West Berlin 0.7, France 8 and Italy 8.5 billion cubic metres a year, although the Italians have still to confirm their contract. The Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Switzerland and Austria are all negotiating for various amounts, and the Russians only need to sell 33 BCM/yr for the pipeline to be viable. This is the normal throughput of a 1,420 mm diameter pipeline but the Yamal line expects to squeeze through another 7 BCM/yr by cooling the gas, thereby reducing its volume, and keeping it cool by means of German-supplied refrigeration plants located at intervals along the pipeline.

The Europeans need Yamal gas because of the coming oil squeeze which many people expect before the end of the century. Europe's indigenous gasfields at Groningen (Holland) and the North Sea are subject to conservation policies, coal and nuclear power are environmentally unpopular, and imports of gas from elsewhere would have to be liquidifed, making them very expensive. A liquefaction plan for Nigerian gas has recently collapsed for this reason.

The USSR needs to sell gas to the West. The Comecon countries have notched up a debt to the West of over 80 billion dollars which is accruing interest all the time, and which looks increasingly impossible to pay off. The countries with the most unmanageable debts, like Poland, are facing acute difficulties in merely paying the interest. The Soviet Union, helped by its large oil sales to the West, has succeeded in keeping its debt down to 15-17 billion dollars, but with its oil exports falling and oil prices tumbling, it needs to sell gas to get into the black.

The Russians hope to get an average price (in 1981 terms) of 0.187 dollars per cubic

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

metre for the 1,000 BCM they will sell the West over 25 years. This will bring them 187 billion dollars of hard currency which should enable them to increase their imports of Western goods, pay off their debts, and guarantee the debts of Eastern European countries.

The Reagan administration has been trying hard to get the deal stopped, ostensibly on the grounds that Western Europe will become over-dependent on Soviet fuel by the late 1980s. The turbines for the compressor stations are patented by General Electric, who supply certain parts for them from their Schenectady factory, and as long ago as last November, the Americans informed the Russians that they would not allow these parts to be used for the Yamal pipeline. This affects John Brown and AEG Kanis in particular, and they are unlikely to offend their American supplier by trying to circumvent the new sanctions. The Russians have foreseen this eventuality, and are busy tooling up their Venskii Zavod factory in Leningrad to produce similar turbines, which they originally planned to use on another important pipeline from Urengoi to Novopskov in the eastern Ukraine. They are now likely to use the Leningrad turbines for the Yamal line, and take delivery of the Western machines for the domestic pipeline as and when John Brown and AEG Kanis are able to supply them.

The Yamal pipeline is due for completion by mid-1984, but Soviet planners have predicted that the gas will start flowing by the end of 1983. The project is likely to be of immense benefit to both the USSR and Western Europe, while the Americans will merely succeed in shooting themselves in the foot.

Henry Taylor

CHANGE ON THE ULTRA RIGHT

From 1975 to 1979 the National Front pursued a strategy unique on the ultra-right. It aimed to achieve political power, and to weld together its own uneasy coalition, through success at the polls. While the strategy, and the rhetoric supporting it, had been present in party statements in both 1974 general elections, the 1979 general election was widely presented as the ultimate test of the viability of this strategy.

The National Front put forward 303 candidates in the 1979 election, representing a considerable investment in campaign deposits alone. This, and the party's move to more business-like headquarters, while provoking some speculation on sources of party finance, served to make the party credible as an electoral entity. Academic research also bolstered the party's apparent credibility, with one opinion survey predicting 25 NF Members of Parliament in an election based on proportional representation. As it happened, the trend away from the high point of 1976 signalled by the 1978 council elections was amplified to the proportions of an electoral debacle in the 1979 general election. Its candidates averaged but 1.6% of the total vote, the worst ever showing in a British election by a party with more than 100 candidates, and £45,000 went in lost deposits. Having presented it as the test of 10 years of political activism the lesson of the election seemed obvious to the leaders of the ultra-right.

The immediate effect of electoral failure was to shear apart the party's unruly factions. The NF itself fragmented into 4 groups: the Constitutional Movement under the former Deputy Chairman; the New National Front under John Tyndall, Chairman during the election; the British Democratic Party formed around the Leicester branch, the party's largest branch outside London; and the rump of the party under former Activities Organiser Martin Webster. Estimates of membership were recently put at 750 members of the CM, 600

USSR special departures

May Day in Moscow 24th April
Moscow, Tallin, Leningrad 12th April
Georgia and Armenia 25th May
Half term for teachers Moscow, Leningrad 29th May
Summer youth tours including Georgia and Armenia, Ukraine and Midnight Sun in Murmansk

Progressive Tours Ltd.

12 Porchester Place, Marble Arch, London W2 2BS
Telephone 01-262 1676. Telex 25135.

Housing . . . Social Security . . . Youth Employment . . . The State . . . Health Care . . . Public . . . Social Services . . . Local Authorities . . . Expenditure . . . Education . . . Resistance . . . Riots . . .

CSP

Critical Social Policy

. . . is now in its second year of publication.
Single issues £2.50 from bookshops
Year's subscription from: Gordon Peters, University of Leicester, 107 Princess Road East, Leicester LE1 7LA
Complete set of volume 1 £6.00

It's April!

Don't be a fool!

Subscribe to Marxism Today at once.

The rates for one year are:
Inland individuals £7.80, institutions £10.40
Overseas individuals £10.40, institutions £13.

Send the form below, with your cheque or PO made out to *Central Books Ltd*, to Central Books, 14 The Leathermarket, London SE1 3ER.

You can't make a fool of me! Send Marxism Today for one year starting with the issue.

Name

Address

Marxism Today April '82

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Collet's

COLLET'S LONDON BOOKSHOP
64-66 Charing Cross Road London WC2

Ellen Wilkinson, a biography
Betty D Vernon
£14.95 Hbk

Popular Culture and Class Conflict, 1590-1914
Eds Eileen and Stephen Yeo
£25.00 Hbk

The Break up of Britain (new edition)
Tom Nairn
£4.95 Pbk

'Race' in Britain
ed Charles Husband
£6.95 Pbk

Mondragon and Economic Analysis
Henk Thomas and Chris Logan
£12.00 Hbk

The Wasting of the British Economy
Sydney Pollard
£11.95 Hbk

Shop open:
Mon, Tues, Weds 10am — 6.30pm
Thurs 10am — 7pm
Fri 10.30am — 7pm
Sat 10am — 6pm

Telephone 01-836 6306
Send cheques, postal orders or book tokens to the above address

please allow 40p per book for post and packing, or £2 for 5 books or more.

B Berberoglu
TURKEY IN CRISIS: From State Capitalism to Neo-Colonialism
In the first history of the 20th Century Turkish economy to appear in English for many years, Dr Berberoglu covers the emergence of nationalist Turkey, the failure of transition to a mature industrial state and the decline of state capitalism into neo-colonial dependence.
Hb £10.95

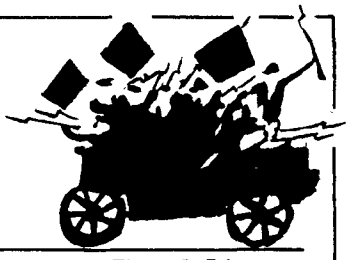
Bobby Siu
WOMEN OF CHINA: Imperialism and Women's Resistance 1900-1949
The story of Chinese womens participation in the struggle for a new society.
Hb £16.95 Pb £4.95

Juliette Minces
THE HOUSE OF OBEDIENCE: Women in Arab Society
Examines life within the traditional Arab family explaining the notions of honour, shame and identity which condition women's experience and how ordinary women cope with the harsh restrictions imposed upon them. Also serves as a useful guide to the past and present legal status of women in each of the various Arab countries.
HB £14.95

Full catalogue (enclose SAE) from:
ZED PRESS, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DN

Zed

The Other Bookshop



328 Upper Street London N1
Telephone 01 226 0571

Open 10-6 Mon Tues Wed Sat 11-7 Thurs & Fri

The Battle for the Labour Party
Kogan & Kogan
£1.75 pb Fontana

Under the Eagle
Jenny Pearce
£2.50 pb Latin American Bureau

Ten Days That Shook the World
John Reed
£1.95 pb Penguin

Summer Before the Frost, Solidarnosc in Poland
Jean-Yves Potel
£3.95 pb Pluto

Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries
Rosemary Sayigh
£4.95 pb Zed

Abortion Politics
Marsh & Chambers
£4.95 pb Junction Books

Mail Order Service — add 20 per cent for p&p.
Orders to:
The Other Bookshop, Box 50, London N1.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

members of the BDP, 750 members of the NNF, and 800 members of the NF (which claims 4000 members). As the NF disintegrated an obscure ultra-right group, the British Movement, began to achieve increasing attention. Its rise to prominence is indicative of significant and disturbing changes in strategy.

The British Movement was founded in 1968 from the remnants of the National Socialist Party, a tiny group of avowed Nazis led by Colin Jordan. Jordan was not electorally oriented, being content to await the call to power to save Britain from the Bolshevik hordes. His lieutenant, Michael McLaughlin, took over in 1975 on Jordan's resignation after a shoplifting charge. McLaughlin set about widening membership. After 1979 he was well-placed to siphon support from the collapsing NF and by the end of 1980 had nearly 3000 members in his overtly revolutionary Nazi party. This shift towards a group whose supporters are overwhelmingly young and working class represents the principal consequence of the Front's failure in 1979. The approach pursued by the ultra-right moved from electoral activity towards a 'militant, active and violent strategy for gaining power' (S. Taylor, 'Strategy changes on the ultra-right', *New Community,* 9(2) Autumn 1981). That this is not a consequence simply of the dissension in the NF is clear in the Front's pursuit of the same strategy after its divisions were, for the present, resolved.

Several factors contributed to the mobilisation of youths behind such groups. Unprecedented levels of unemployment have combined with the re-birth of a skinhead youth culture. The recruiting policy of the British Movement and, later, the NF, was also influential, as was the growth of racism amongst the young, documented by recent research. There is certainly evidence of higher levels of racist behaviour at football matches, violence at concerts and attacks on ethnic minorities. However, it would be wrong to infer that such groups appeal only to the young working class. At least one study has reported widespread NF support among 14-19 year olds in a middle class suburban area as well as in communities with a tradition of racism. This suggests that the NF and BM are now associated with a developing sub-culture amongst the young generally, regardless of class or locality. The role of groups such as the BM in these activities seems clear; for example, the BM appeared to play a part in the worsening of race relations in Coventry in early and mid 1981. There appears to have been a significant shift of strategy on the ultra-right, a pincer movement deploying militant action on the one hand and electoral efforts on the other. Groups such as the BM may concentrate on the former but even the backlash caused by such activities can be used by electorally-oriented groups such as the BDP to suggest that their intervention is required to manage the breakdown of consensus indicated by militant clashes.

These developments have projected young militant activists into a position of importance as supporters of ultra-right groups, and considerable attention has been paid to this trend. More neglected have been the implications of the strategy change for the former stalwarts of the ultra-right, older supporters and particularly those drawn from the traditional seat of the ultra-right, the lower middle class. One particular development seems significant in this respect. The less public ultra-right organisations, such as the League of St George, have increasingly given attention to programmes of civil defence and survival training, urged on supporters as necessary responses to the crisis in East-West relations. The older supporters are recommended to participate in programmes which reflect their now more marginal place in the movement and the declining importance of electoral activity. By suggesting attendance at survival camps, the purchase of protective equipment and guerrilla warfare manuals, the ultra-right puts before its older supporters a goal more apocalyptic than electoral success. It may be that the older members are being prepared both for continuing electoral failure and for surviving the chaos in which the younger members will more directly participate.

Nigel Fielding

photo: Mike Abrahams/Network

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The future of the police is now a major political issue. Will the result be a further drift towards authoritarianism or a more accountable police force?

Policing in the Eighties

Interview with Chief Constable John Alderson

photo: Mike Abrahams/Network

Since the riots and since the Scarman Inquiry there's been a much greater public perception about policing issues and that policing is facing a number of choices at the moment. Can you say what you think is the character of the crisis facing the police at the moment?

The police have been disorientated. Policing policies are still based on out-dated assumptions in many respects. A police service with traditions based on an authoritarian and paternalistic society is not quite in the right kind of condition to handle an increasingly liberated and questioning society. When the police were formed in 1829, society was ruled by a few people and universal suffrage was merely a dream. Indeed, the police of course were partly introduced to police the reform movements and the Chartists, as well as what they would have described in those days as the criminal classes. So, to that extent, the police in the 19th century have to be seen on the side of small power groups regulating the mass of society. But now practically everybody belongs to a power group of some kind. So the police have to face in many different directions at the same time. I think police philosophy, if I might use that expression, hasn't adjusted rapidly enough to accommodate this speed of change one has witnessed over the last 30 years and particularly over the last 15 or so.

The divide between the police and society over the last 20 years, has been very much associated in practical policing terms with the abandonment of the traditional beat constable and its replacement by a more automated, technologised police force. Why has it happened?

Well, if one's a policeman in a pedestrian society, one has to be a pedestrian. If one is a policeman in a motorised society one has to be capable of becoming motorised. You can't police a motorised society without motor cars any more than you can police an armed society without guns. Nor can you police a computerised society without computers. The police have to keep pace with technological development. But, having said that, it does not mean that policing in its basic form should become a mechanised concept. What happened was that an undermanned force, facing a growing workload, began to see technology as some kind of salvation. The police culture itself began to be affected. I mean the younger policemen no longer saw themselves in the personal contact, walking situation or going to where people are. They merely saw themselves as 'responders to incidents', as social controllers *per se,* rather than achieving social control through other people, their communities and informal controlling mechanisms such as family and school.

It was compounded by the introduction of the unit beat policing system in the 1960s. The theory was that you should have men on their own beats working 8 hours, so that their own beats would only be covered for 8 hours out of the 24. But you would have a motorised response element in the team which would be there 24 hours. It would also have its own detectives, it would have its own collator of intelligence and it would be a self-contained entity, policing an area round the clock on different levels. In practice it resulted in all the policemen becoming motorised because people had failed to spot that unit beat policing just devoured manpower. Most forces would have had to double their strength to cope with unit beat policing in its pure form.

From many recent police statements, you get the impression that up until the 1960s there was a kind of cosy, community relationship in which avuncular, large bobbies trundled round on the beat, giving a warning here and a clip on the ear there. You know, everyone knew their place and all that stuff. It doesn't seem a very good historical model to me. Isn't there a degree of self-delusion in some of the talk about bobbies on the beat, in the pre-unit beat policing era?

I've often pondered on this particular mythology and I think it is largely mythology. I think the British people have a nostalgia for a good police. They have an innate desire to admire the police as police — as a system. That doesn't mean they admire police as policemen or women necessarily, but there's a feeling that we can do these things better than other people. It's like people will say that British justice is the best in the world. Well, what does that mean? Does it mean it's the best of a bad lot or does it mean that it's just a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

kind of chauvinism? One of the recent public opinion polls shows this up remarkably well. A lot of people indicated a falling in their attitudes towards the police, but when they were asked the question, 'Do you think our police are still the best in the world?' over 90% said 'Yes'.

The policing of demonstrations is a subject which has got a lot of attention recently and has been an area of conflict. Do you think the police have got their approach to major demonstrations right and if they haven't, what's wrong with it?

Well, I think what's wrong with it is that the social context has changed. It became obvious in the March 1968 Vietnam demonstration on the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square. I think the police would now admit that they got it wrong — tactically wrong, in as much as people got trapped in Grosvenor Square, that there was confrontation between police and public, that the mounted police were seen to be inadequate, that individual officers were going around committing acts of violence on groups of people and so on. A lot of lessons were learned from that and it was in 1968 that the Yard began to change its tactics towards public order. Instead of the situation being controlled by the commander on the spot, there was the building up of a new command centre at New Scotland Yard with television cameras and so on, so that the public order situation could be viewed from this remote position and reinforcements could be deployed strategically and the commander could see what was going on. So, by the time of the October demonstration in Grosvenor Square, which was attended by some tens of thousands, where London had braced itself for tremendous mayhem because of what was going on in Paris and other parts of the Western world at the same time, it never happened. It resulted in a triumph for the demonstrators and a triumph for the police. People acted out their roles and it passed off in a note of some triumph and self-congratulation.

But, you see, since then things have taken on a different characteristic. We have seen a repetition of the Communist/Fascist clashes in the 1930s which were policed with some vigour by the Metropolitan Police. We have seen also the deliberate use of right wing extremist groups to intimidate and upset sensitive racial areas of cities. Again the police have been seen as almost protectors of these extremist groups and that's been unfortunate for the police because it has to some extent damaged their image of impartiality.

Do you think there is a more imaginative alternative to that? Because I've always had the feeling that when questioned about their tactics on National Front marches, most police chiefs have taken the view that they're doing the only thing that they possibly can do, which is to load literally thousands of officers into the streets to allow a march to go ahead. As you say, one effect of that is for the police to be seen to be protecting racist groups.

Yes, I think this is grounded in the understandable belief that it's the duty of the police to facilitate the right of freedom of demonstration. Bans under the Public Order Act 1936 are available to the police and to the Home Secretary to avoid some of the worst excesses. But it was a characteristic of police thinking that it was a failure almost to have to seek a ban on a march and I think that led at times to some misunderstanding and to people feeling that wasn't always the best attitude to take.

That's putting it mildly.

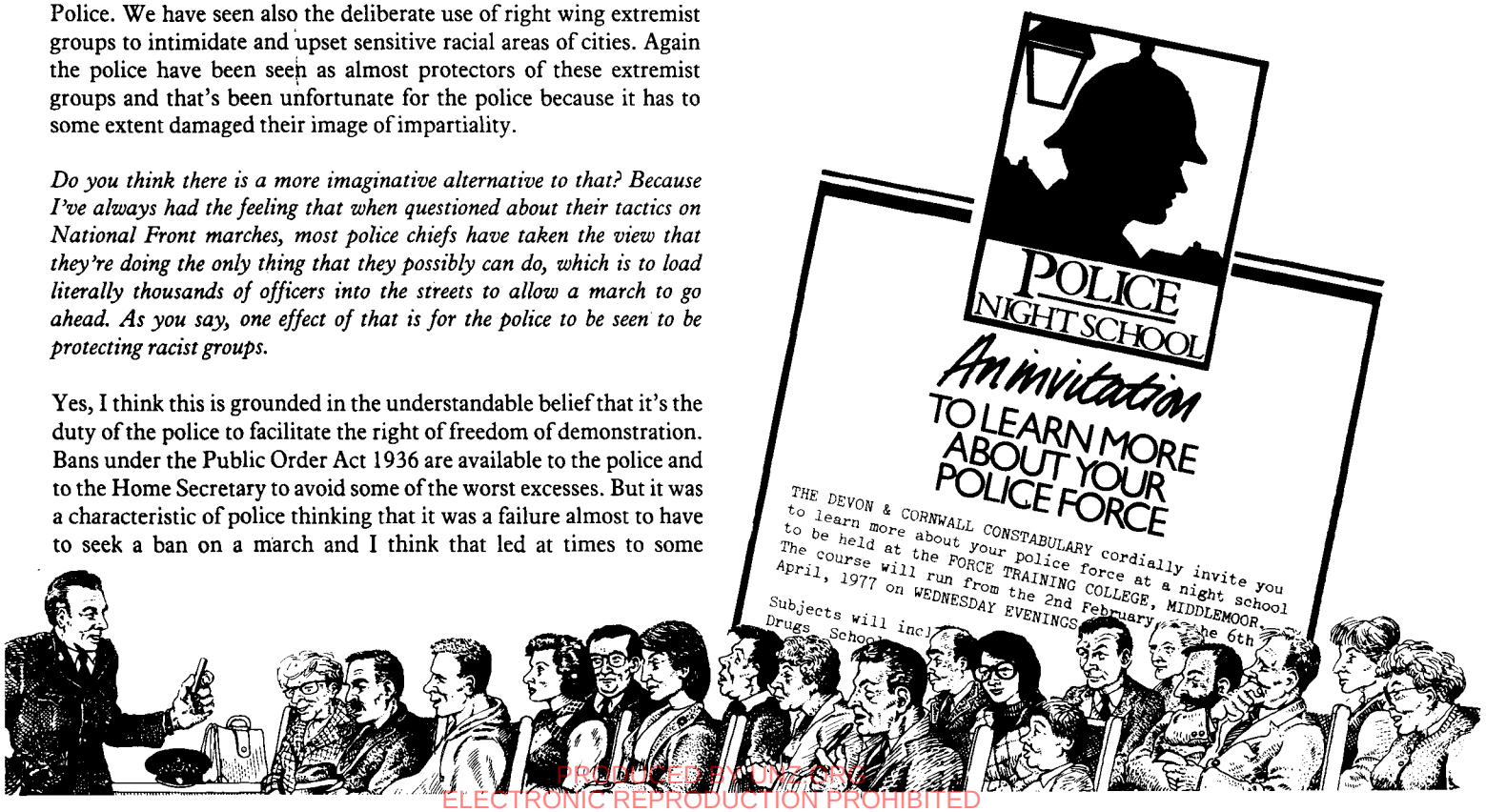
That's putting it mildly, yes. Since then there has been a greater readiness to seek bans on marches. In most parts of the country, certainly in the last few years, as a result of some of the damage caused by allowing marches to take place which maybe should have been banned, chief constables, local authorities and the Home Secretary have been much more ready to ban these marches and that's been happening in the last few years.

Do you approve of that?

I approve of it, reluctantly, obviously, because it's a very difficult line to tread between freedom of demonstration and political control of demonstration. If carried too far it could become a political mechanism and could become abused. But I approve of it at the present time, in its present form, but I do acknowledge that ultimately if people in positions of power and authority wanted to use the Public Order Act widely, it could result in a diminution of the right to protest generally.

You said to your police authority some time after the riots that you didn't intend to equip your force with the kind of technology that was then being discussed and made available to other forces, water cannon, plastic bullets, CS gas and so on. Can you explain what you were thinking of there?

Yes, I remember quite well that it seemed to me that the police found themselves in something of a watershed here. It appeared that it wouldn't have taken much to drive the police into a situation where they had passed the point of no return in the style of policing which we like to see in this country. We would get a quasi-military police armed with weapons for shooting at people. Even though they're called rubber bullets, they're capable of killing people. That would


POLICE
NIGHT SCHOOL
An invitation
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR POLICE FORCE
THE DEVON & CORNWALL CONSTABULARY cordially invite you to learn more about your police force at a night school to be held at the FORCE TRAINING COLLEGE, MIDDLEMOOR. The course will run from the 2nd February to the 6th April, 1977 on WEDNESDAY EVENINGS.
Subjects will incl
Drugs Schoo

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have given hostages to fortune. So would other equipment, particularly the gas which is indiscriminate in its effect on people. I think once policing passes that threshold of police violence, you have probably raised the level of violence to a point where it's acceptable. The only thing that can go on from there is more violence. So my protest was almost a moral one, as well as a practical one, and that's why I took that particular position.

If you'd been in charge of an inner-city police force, would you have done the same thing?

Well it's difficult to answer a hypothetical question like that. I was sending men to these areas and was responsible for their attitudes and their images and their place in society so to that extent I was already involved. I think one shouldn't be excluded from the debate on this even though one isn't necessarily in the hot seat. I can only go back to my point that some of these riots were anti-police and I want to ask why should that be?

You've taken the view that your Special Branch records are unnecessary to a considerable degree and you've instructed your force to weed them out. The police are, however, always greedy for intelligence. How do you approach the police role in political information gathering?

I think it's fair to say that generally there's an appetite amongst policemen to seek more power and more information, generally. It's a natural tendency, but for the leader there is a further responsibility placed on one's shoulders to ensure that this appetite is contained within reasonable bounds. I think it's fair to say that, as far as political activity is concerned, unless there is a subversive, unlawful element attached to it, then there is no place in Special Branch records for that kind of information. The Special Branch was set up to counter the Fenian movement at the end of the 19th century. But now it has extended into those areas where political subversion of an unlawful kind has either been the declared or covert intention of an organisation. I think that in a democracy, which has to be defended to some extent, there is a place for that sort of police work.

What do you mean by political subversion of an unlawful kind? The precision of that kind of definition is all important here.

Well it would certainly at one end include organisations with the intentions of overthrowing democratic institutions by force or intimidation.

Overthrowing the institutions themselves rather than changing the policies of those who control or govern those institutions?

Oh yes, certainly. That's legitimate political activity. That's what makes our country work. That's what enhances the evolution of society into higher ideals of fairness and liberty. And without the freedom to act, to collaborate, to combine to bring about pressure on institutions, and the individuals with power, there is no democracy.

And have you found that from your examination of Special Branch work, that it has blurred that distinction?

I've found, by making checks on the activities of my officers, that there is this innate tendency to want to record almost anything, however remotely connected it may be with activity which might in the loosest sense be regarded as subversive. This word 'subversion' needs to be defined, I agree with you. Some people would regard subversion as anything which is designed to change society. That's not what the Home Secretary means when he speaks in Parliament on this issue. It has to do with unlawful activity and, I've said, that would include at the one extreme, the use of armed force to overthrow institutions, or to undermine them, or to undermine the confidence of people generally, or to collaborate with foreign powers which themselves have a declared intention of undermining our institutions.

I've found that by making checks on the activities of my officers, that there is this innate tendency to want to record almost anything

Obviously the police need to keep records. I don't think anyone can dispute that. It's one thing, however, for them to keep records on people who have been convicted of offences. But we've seen more and more that police are beginning to computerise and make more generally available, information of a more general kind which doesn't necessarily have anything to do with people's criminal activities. Now, I want to know what kind of constraints you want to see on that?

Well there are many levels of the acquisition of knowledge about society, I mean there's the individual observation of a policeman and the storing up of information in his mind. Now you can't do anything about that. He acquires this knowledge as he goes around his daily duties, and if he's a man with a good memory he knows a great deal. The question is, what use is that put to? If it's put in a bank of information in order that known criminal activists can be brought to justice then I see nothing improper, immoral or unethical about that. If, however, information is collected for its own sake then I do think that is unethical. Putting pressure on people because of what you know about them and inhibiting their activities and restricting their lives and their work, is totally repugnant to me. And that is why the collection of information about people *per se* is unacceptable.

So would you support statutory data control legislation affecting the police?

Certainly, yes.

And it would affect criminal intelligence records?

Yes, yes, certainly. I think one would have to be careful not to disclose information on individuals. But the type of data protection I have in mind is the ability to examine the type of information being kept and the areas of information restricted from people. When you get to criminal intelligence, particularly if you are dealing with extreme cases of terrorism and violent organised crime, the police depend so much on information from other people, and if there is any chance of that being disclosed, it would endanger the sources of information which are necessary for the police to deal with it. But I would have thought that data protection could quite rightly be introduced which would control the scope of information gathering and the types of information regarded as necessary to discharge the police function properly, having regard to the other things I have said about the rights to privacy and the rights not to be put into a position where people can blackmail or intimidate or destroy one's reputation.

Information is central to community policing. So I want to quote to you

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

something which has been written by Tony Bunyan. 'The other aspect of community policing which it is necessary to draw out is the role of the police officer actually on the beat, the community or neighbourhood officers, as they are called. It is part of their training to gather intelligence on the people within their patch and to pass this intelligence to the collator at their local police station. By this means, information gathered by one officer is available to the whole force, including the local Special Branches. . . Community policing, despite its high-sounding purpose, is a double-edged tool to penetrate the community through other professional agencies and by spying on the community under the guise of offering a protective, friendly approach. Consent is thus to be engineered and, in case this fails, intelligence is gathered in an attempt to pre-empt dissent.'

I think what Tony Bunyan describes there is a plausible scenario and I wouldn't deny that. Therefore a premium is placed on accountability, on consultation and scrutiny. If one accepts, as I do, that what Tony Bunyan describes there is a corruption of community policing, then you've to build in safeguards to prevent that. There has to be a form of social contract, there have to be codes, there have to be bills of rights, there have to be scrutineers — I would accept all that. It doesn't invalidate community policing that it draws attention to a corruption of community policing, and if you acknowledge that, that's healthy.

I think a lot of people are very unclear about what community policing means in reality. Do people in Exeter co-exist with their police differently from the way they co-exist in London or anywhere else?

Community policing begins with an appreciation of modern society. It is not primarily concerned with law enforcement but is concerned with social protection and the amelioration of social conditions which lead to the creation of criminogenic circumstances. It's based on a social contract between police in an area, in a community or neighbourhood, and the people who live there. It is a *sine qua non* of community policing that there must be consultation, the sort of thing that Lord Scarman so strongly recommends. Without that there is no community policing. It needs the input of a whole host of other statutory agencies from schools to social services, housing, planning, youth, community welfare, in addition to all the voluntary agencies working in the community, because it is a mechanism to help people to make representations to officials and to play a part in

Some people would regard subversion as anything which is designed to change society

ridding themselves of the fear of crime, the anxieties about the behaviour of their children, anxieties concerning the behaviour of their neighbours and so on. Finally, there must be police officers who are dedicated to the welfare, in its widest sense, of the people in the area. This requires the appointment of well qualified, well chosen, mature, police officers. In its voluntary form it starts by the police assembling as representative a body of people as possible, and that would include the press of course because the dissemination of the proceedings and the attitudes of the police and the people would be very important. But that is only part of the story. It must lead to initiatives within communities and to a dialogue about the crime in a neighbourhood. Each meeting should have a report on crime in the community, what the police are doing about it, how it affects that particular community, what they can do to help themselves. It's not concerned with the enforcement of the law. If introduced by statute, it would represent a considerable constitutional leap forward. So far as I know, there is no developed nation where community policing is constitutionally provided for.

One of the major criticisms that's made on the Left of what you've written and what you've done is that by setting up this sort of structure you harness all the different social agencies into a more comprehensive form of social control, a more sophisticated and more penetrative form of social control at a local level. It's led a lot of people on the Left to be rather sceptical of what it's all about, and rather fearful.

Well, if you say 'on the Left' it depends how far left you're going. If

Alderson, on right holding the balloon, visits the Luxulyan occupation against nuclear power.

photo: Nick Rogers/ *The Observer*

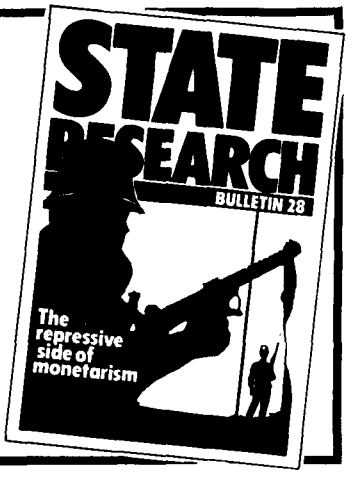
PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

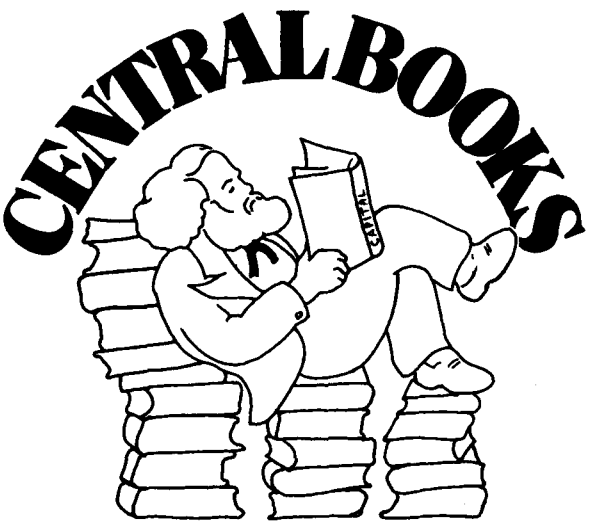
Policing Scotland
by Paul Gordon
'A valuable source book and a political lesson' New Society
'The book contains a great deal of information from a number of sources. I only wish he'd stopped there.' Sergeant Joe Black, Secretary Scottish Police Federation
'A highly biased and inaccurate statement based on conjecture, sinister speculation, prejudice and innuendo.' Police Review
SCOTTISH COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES
146 Holland Street, Glasgow G2 4NG

OUT NOW!

State Research Bulletin
Contains an extensive background paper on the thinking and actions of the Tory government and its contribution to increased repression in Britain.

75p each including p&p
Subscriptions £5 pa
Orders and inquiries to:
Independent Research Publications Ltd
9, Poland St
London W1





Forthcoming Lists
Blatchford, William Morris, early Fabians, the English Revolution, Anarchism, China, and Central Asia.

Write, phone, or come to the shop.
37 Grays Inn Road, London WC1
Open 9.30-5.30, Saturdays 10.00-2.00
Telephone 01-242 6166

HUTCHINSON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

'RACE' IN BRITAIN
Continuity and Change
Charles Husband (ed.)
A set text for Open University course E354 *Ethnic Minorities and Community Relations* which examines the place of the concept of 'race' in contemporary British culture and society.
£6.95 *paper* 09 146911 2

THE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS OF BRITAIN
Fifth edition
John P. Mackintosh
Revised by Peter G. Richards
A revised and updated edition of the classic introduction to British politics, which now includes an analysis of the major political events of the late 1970s.
£4.95 *paper* 09 145531 6

Hutchinson Education,
17/21 Conway Street, London W1P 6JD

INTERESTED IN SOCIALIST POLITICS?

We could fill this space with a thousand reasons why you should find out more about the Communist Party.

Instead we will give you just one – *MARXISM TODAY.*

As the theoretical and discussion journal of the Communist Party it reflects our attractive, committed and open approach to socialist politics.

For the other 999 reasons complete the form below and return to Gordon McLennan, 16 St. John Street, London, EC1M 4AY. Telephone 01-251 4406.

I wish to join/wish to know more about
The Communist Party/The Young Communist League.
Name _____
Address _____
_____ Phone _____

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

you're talking about the extreme Left, I would have thought they would like it because that reflects the totalitarian model of policing through the communes which I've witnessed in China and which one knows exists in other countries. The same would apply to the totalitarian states of the Right where the police are all powerful too. In Nazi Germany the turning of young people against their parents to inform on them and to point out the Jews was an appalling distortion of community policing. But it is a form of it. There are other forms. The community policing of the IRA in parts of Northern Ireland, for example, where the Queen's writ doesn't run, but where the writ of the IRA runs. That's another distortion of community policing. That's policing by unconstitutional terror and all these things have to be guarded against. The kind of community policing that one is talking about here is totally preventive. It has nothing to do with the activation of the criminal process, whereas these other distortions do have. You've to build the model in such a way as to guard against that. The make up of the community policing group should not be totally political if you're to avoid the tyranny of the majority. That is why my model would be one third drawn from elected representatives, which would represent the democratic element, one third nominated by the police authority, which would mean you could get people of experience and civic ability on to the committee, and one third from voluntary bodies and others who wish to put themselves forward. They would have the right to question the police about how complaints are being dealt with, about the nature of policing the area, that which they found repugnant and that which they've found acceptable. The police would also be able to explain their role and make themselves more accountable and this should be healthy. But I would want to stress that the community policing model is a preventive and not an enforcement mechanism.

I'd like to just quote to you something that Colin Moore, who is a Chief Superintendent in your force, has written in his book Community Versus Crime, *where he points to a number of dangers which need to be avoided in any community policing structure. He fears that 'in carrying out the pro-active role, the police come to believe that they are filling what they see as a leadership void in present day society. This assumption could blow back in their faces and create distress and conflict rather than harmony between agencies and within communities. The policeman's leadership qualities, recognised by many in the community, must be subdued so that they are seen in terms of "service" rather than as a new velvet glove on the old iron hand, a more insidious form of social control. There are real dangers here.'*

I would agree with that comment of Colin Moore's. In Devon and Cornwall we had to take the initiative because nobody else could or knew how to and from time to time we've tried to take a minor role in some of these areas but the people have asked us not to. You know, we have the resources, the skills to take the chair, to provide the secretaries, to produce the minutes and so on. But it's because of my experience in the last 8 years or so in doing this kind of thing and in creating community policing that I came to the conclusion that it would be only proper if it were done constitutionally. If its form were defined by parliament, the police would play the role of servants of the community. We're always saying that we're the servants of the people, we should act as servants of the people rather than their masters. If we were to be given the task of running it, this would be totally against the proper evolution of a more acceptable, democratic form of community policing.

Doesn't it come down to the question of control? Community policing which is done to the community by the police is one thing. But policing which is actually under the charge of the community in a formal as well as an informal sense is surely the only guarantee that community policing is the property of the community. So doesn't it follow from that, that the police must be much more closely formally controlled by democratic processes than they have ever been so far in this country?

Yes. I think the police in this country are less democratically controlled in the local sense than in recent history. The Police Act of 1964 created massive police forces and local government reorganisation made some of them even bigger. The biggest of all, the Metropolitan Police, is manifesting these growth pains now. I mean, what has been accepted as suitable for London for 150 years is not now regarded as such by many people. It is not sufficiently democratically accountable to local democracy in London. The people who pay a proportion of the Metropolitan Police's bills have no say in how they are policed. Lord Scarman himself recognises this implicitly. The same could be said for the provincial police forces, where the chief constables are more powerful than they ever have been before and less accountable in actuality, whatever the constitution may say.

> The community policing of the IRA in parts of Northern Ireland, for example . . . That's policing by unconstitutional terror and all these things have to be guarded against

The problem also centres on the political direction of police activities and political approval of the nature of policing. These are two different things but they're not often separated. The difference can be clarified by expressing it like this. It is not healthy to have the enforcement of the law in particular cases and in particular situations directed by a political force because this could lead to a tyranny of the majority. That's one thing. But it is surely the political right of people to influence and even decide what sort of policing we're going to have in this country. If the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)[1] thought that the country deserved a more militaristic style of policing and if chief constables generally were to decide that —which I'm sure they probably wouldn't — but if they did, without any form of political debate, or say, or control, that would be a quite unconstitutional situation in my view. And I blame police authorities in many ways for not exercising their function properly.

Can we try to be a bit more specific about that? Let's take an example, the question of smoking of cannabis. If, under the system you're talking about, your police authority came along and said, look, this is a multiracial community, we've got several thousand people here who smoke cannabis and we feel that any attempt to bring the law to bear on them is actually an attack on them as people, on their whole lifestyle. Don't bring prosecutions for possession of cannabis. How would you respond to that?

I would say, I'm sorry, I can't give you that promise. Parliament has passed a law and I could be regarded as doing less than my duty to the law and to society if I didn't have regard for that. But I would say, I could caution more often for minor cases, point out that it's regarded as dangerous to health. You don't have to activate the criminal process. It's the wise use of police discretion in regard to cultural susceptibilities.

[1] This is the chief constables' 'trade union'. There are two other police representative organisations, the Superintendents Association and the Police Federation (representing constables, sergeants and inspectors) —*Ed.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Yes, but would you be prepared to be explicit about the fact that you would show that discretion?

Certainly.

You wouldn't leave it to emerge from your practice?

If the question were put to me, I would deal with it like that. I certainly would say that I would prosecute people who were making a living out of selling cannabis, I would prosecute people who were pushing cannabis. You see you may have another group of people in that area saying 'I hope you deal firmly with my children if you catch them in possession of cannabis'. You have to be very sensitive about this because it's not easy in a multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-social class area where there are people with competing claims on your discretion. This is why policing is so complicated. It's too complicated for the policemen to do. That's why you need the collective wisdom of the neighbourhood, so they can work out for themselves what their priorities are.

I think we shall have to keep up reasonable pressure for change if it's to come about. The police certainly won't change for themselves

Doesn't it follow from that, that police should be freer to take a part in political activity?

Well I think it's fair to say that society will lose if the police are forced to conform to one idea of policing. In cultural terms, it's expected that there will be one police point of view. I've been reminded on more than one occasion by the president of my own Association that I should not speak at certain gatherings or at certain conferences. And I've found that I've had to break rank to do that and I've done it of course. But I've always done it in the hope that one could discuss ideas rather than personalities. I don't think it would be in the interests of the police to engage in slanging matches about each other because I think it might unsettle the public but I think the serious putting forward of competing views about policing is in the public interest.

Would you be happy for police constables to attend an open public meeting on the police and give their own points of view, making clear that they were police officers?

Certainly. In fact, I was reminded by the Home Office in the run-up to the last general election to desist from this practice when my officers were attending meetings of various political parties and expressing their views. It was another politician who drew the Home Secretary's notice to this practice and I was gently reminded that it was not helpful to do that. I think there's all the difference in the world between expressing a point of view at political rallies and being active in party political problems. I don't think that is right.

What about the possibility that the Police Federation should have the same rights and privileges as trade unions do, including the right to strike and to affiliate to the TUC?

Well I think the policeman should have as many civic rights as anybody else in society. But let me say this. One has to bear in mind that in our society a lot of people do not belong to trade unions and, if the police become part of trade union power to be used against those sections of society, I don't think that would be, to use an English expression, fair. Now what one has to try to do is to come to terms with this as well as one can and certainly the police should be able to combine to achieve their own progress. Certainly the police in my view, could take part as observers and even contributors to trade union meetings. I myself have spoken at trades councils' meetings about the police.

Finally. You're resigning from the police force on 30 April. Is this because you are pessimistic about the future for your approach to policing? Have you given up?

I don't think the future is pessimistic. I think the current political debate about the police together with Lord Scarman's report are likely to bring about some of the reforms in the constitutional arrangements for the police which I myself would wish to see. I think it's a pity in a way that it's taken riotous behaviour to bring this question to the conference table. I don't think I can do much more in the police. I clearly can't get into the police establishment. I'm not likely to be nominated for the position of President of ACPO, which is quite an influential position, or onto that inner group of chief constables who control much of the policy. So I certainly wouldn't want to hang around for another 5 years just being a kind of gadfly. I'd much rather continue this important debate with greater freedom, although I'm well aware of the fact that not speaking as a servant of the police obviously will somewhat diminish the force of some of my arguments. I'm not too despondent about the future, though I think we shall all have to keep up reasonable pressure for change if it's to come about. The police certainly won't change for themselves. □

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Labour Left has made great advances. That progress now seems to have been halted. And one of the reasons is the Labour Left's own weaknesses.

Sam Aaronovitch

Recipe for Defeat

Within a relatively short time, major changes have taken place in British politics. We have seen the victory of Thatcherism within the Tory Party and then its force unleashed on the people and the economy since 1979; the rise of a major new political formation in the shape of the SDP in alliance with the Liberals; and, not unconnected, substantial changes in the Labour Party. A new and difficult phase has opened up in the struggle for left advance in the Labour Party and this article is concerned with the perspectives of the Left in that context.

Let us briefly outline the balance sheet as it can now be set out. There have been major gains on *policy* (such as unilateral disarmament, clear position for withdrawal from the EEC); *on democratising the constitution* (compulsory reselection of candidates, NEC involvement in the election manifesto, an electoral college which requires the participation of the trade unions, constituency parties and the Parliamentary Labour Party in the election of the leader); *on winning positions of leadership* and authority in the organisations of the Labour Party (especially constituency and ward branches). The speed of the victories astonished even the Left itself. But of course there have also been the recent defeats. Progress has in certain respects been halted with signs of possible reverses. Benn was defeated, albeit marginally, in the contest for Deputy Leader; the PLP has kept the major influence on the content of the election manifesto; the composition of the National Executive shifted to the disadvantage of the left at the last Conference; among the unions, the three-year rule for constitutional issues was reimposed.

The atmosphere within the Labour Party is now very fraught and the truce agreed at Bishop Stortford is clearly fragile. No-one can be sure whether it will hold to any degree. What is certain however, is that the future of the Labour Party in terms of its ability to play a major role in British politics is in question. The Left itself is confronted with different perspectives and strategies and the future of the party will depend on which ones are adopted.

Four competing strategic conceptions

I am aware that setting out these strategies involves a great deal of oversimplification. Nonetheless, the essence of them can be conveyed as follows.

The first, held primarily by the Right and some part of the Centre, is to argue for the *status quo,* regarding even the recent limited reforms as unwelcome. This is the 'broad church' in which the ministers and the hymn-books are to remain in the tradition of Attlee, Gaitskell, Wilson and Callaghan. The desire is to purge the Left and cement an essentially Right and Centre-Right leadership.

The second, held by some sections of the Left within and outside the party, is for the Labour Party to become, in the shortest possible time, a thorough-going socialist party with a bold and uncompromising socialist programme pursuing the socialist transformation of Britain and organised to accomplish this. But what further characterises this perspective, explicitly or implicitly, is the view that winning the battle for leadership within the Party is the crucial issue which decides everything.

The third view essentially believes that the Labour Party must be transformed into a revolutionary party of a 'vanguard type', completely purged of its Right and Centre and of the 'soft' left, able in a revolutionary situation to seize power and proceed swiftly to the construction of socialism. If at some stage, this requires a split in the Labour Party so that a large revolutionary party can be carved from it, this would be an important possibility.

It should be added that there are some holding both the second and third views who would also argue that the link with the trade union movement is an obstacle to the socialist transformation of the Labour Party.

The fourth view shares with the second, the general proposition that the Labour Party must move along the path of becoming a party committed to socialist transformation. It recognises however that this is a prolonged process. The Labour Party has been constructed as an alliance of class and social forces involving trade union affiliation. Such an alliance has provided the Labour Party with a substantial electoral base and connected it with the most powerful class organisations of the workers, namely, the trade union movement. The perspective is not to lose these assets but to shift the centre of

Stan Pemberton casts the T&GWU card vote at the Labour Party Conference, Brighton 1981.

photo: Laurie Sparham/Network

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

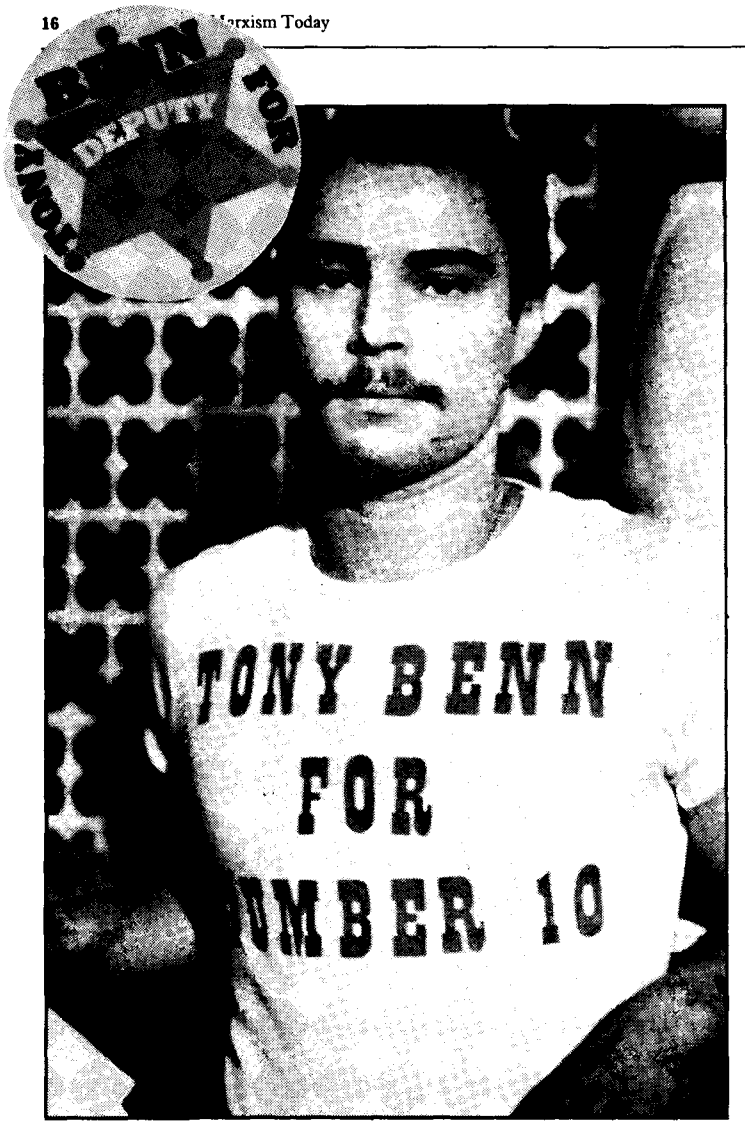


photo: John Sturrock/Network

gravity of the alliance to the left as part of the struggle to shift the centre of gravity of British politics as a whole.

I do not intend to spend much time on the first conception since most readers of *Marxism Today* will agree that it is precisely this leadership which has contributed to the steady decline of the Labour Party and its almost total failure to lift popular political consciousness. To accept such a 'freeze' would mean in practice, to go backwards; it would demoralise the body of members and supporters who have acquired new hope from the fight to change the party; and it threatens any possibility of the party becoming, even in a limited way, an effective campaigning body.

In essence, this is also what is involved in the 'Tatchell case'. The so-called 'defence of parliamentary democracy' is essentially Labour *electoralism:* the view that elections decide everything; that power resides only in the legislature; that it is the responsibility of voters to elect their representatives and the job of the party to bring the voters to the poll. It is precisely this which has crippled the constituency and ward parties, turned them into mere adjuncts of Labour groups on councils or the PLP. It is true that those who hold this view show a not misplaced concern about Labour's vote, but the fact is they have presided over a major decline in Labour's share of the electorate as well as party membership and activity.

The components of the Labour Left

So I turn now to the other three strategic perspectives which are supported by varying groups within the Left. For this reason, it is well to look first at the different trends within the Left which are now being expressed in a growing internal debate. Anyone closely observing or involved in the Labour Left will understand that it is difficult to disentangle all the tendencies but, once again conscious that the lines are not all clear cut, I distinguish them in the following ways.

First, there is the 'traditional' Left often associated with the core in the *Tribune* group of MPs. It draws on the radical democratic and liberal tradition in British politics; it is committed to the vision of socialism and is motivated by a strong moral sense. However, it's socialist commitment has not traditionally been equally matched by an understanding of the struggle for a shift in power — either within the Labour Party or the country — and the campaigning strategy that this involves.

The second tendency is the expression of the new left forces within the party including those recently joining it. It is a product of the gathering crisis of the Labour Party and its 1974-79 government. It has been very concerned with making the Left a credible and powerful alternative to the Right within the Party. And in this context it is committed to pursuing policies which in the words of the 1973 Labour Party programme will bring about a 'fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth, in favour of working people and their families.' Benn has made himself the main personification of this 'new left' and indeed can be said to have been a major inspiration in its development.

The third tendency comprises those involved in campaigning groups linked with the socialist feminist movement and community politics who have come to see the Labour Party as a possible instrument of radical change which could win support for their objectives. Like the second tendency it has also recruited from groups of intellectuals who were the product of 1968 and its aftermath.

The fourth tendency consists of essentially Trotskyist groups like Militant and the Socialist Labour Group.

A united fight

Virtually all these tendencies came together in the fight to advance radical policies and democratic constitutional changes within the Labour Party. The fact that the campaign was so focussed allowed it to win broad support within the party and in some sections of the trade union movement. And in addition, it was able to rally behind a 'leader' who personified that fight and who had come *from* the 'seat of power' *to* the left and strong socialist commitment, reversing the more usual trend of entering the seat of power and losing socialist commitment. Benn understood the meaning of power and was willing to help lead the struggle to achieve it.

The Left could make no bigger mistake than to write off the significance of the coming general election

But the defeat of Benn in the Deputy Leadership contest and the other setbacks suffered by the Left has brought out into the open the differences between the previously largely united tendencies. It is worth noting that the first tendency (ie, the Tribunite left) is poorly organised with no base in the localities; the second and third tendencies are not organised within the Labour Party in any unified way around a given strategic view; and only the last is strongly organised around a committed and specific strategy. The differences now emerging on the Left are therefore tending to take the form of a contest between well organised Trotskyist groups and relatively disorganised members of the 'broad left' who now find themselves, reluctantly, drawn into factional battles.

Now let us return to the strategic scenarios outlined earlier. What

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has linked the second and third perspectives over the recent period is their preoccupation with the battle for leadership of the Labour Party and control of its organisations. As a result the broad left and the ultra-left perspective were conflated. To win the leadership of the Labour Party became the central and crucial question, the key to all further advance. To make a powerful and swift bid for leadership became the priority to which all else must be subordinated. Though it may be a crude way of presenting it, the idea implicit or explicit was that such a changed and socialist leadership could then boldly present a socialist programme to the electorate and that, as some plainly said, would then meet with a massive response from the voters.

This is perhaps a useful point, when we are discussing the 'capture' of the Labour Party, to keep in mind the state of its organisation and membership. Official membership is now only around 300,000 and that is probably an overstatement. In large numbers of working class areas, it barely exists. Many party organisations were and are in practice run by caucuses centred on the Labour groups on councils. In such circumstances, groups organised for the purpose of gaining control have been able to make rapid advances in a number of wards and constituencies. This very rapidity has also been a source of misunderstanding and miscalculation by many on the Left.

groups organised for the purpose of gaining control have been able to make rapid advances

Basic misconceptions

Those who hold the second strategic conception are surely right in their broad general desire to transform the Labour Party. But they are wrong in their political judgement about *how* the party must change. *Desire* for change does not constitute a *strategy* for change. The process by which this can happen is no less vital than the objective and this process must take into account the present balance of political forces, and the need to maintain the broad alliance character of the party and its mass electoral support.

Put differently, the Left has to consider not only the nature of the alliances which make up the structure of the party but also of those which make up the party's actual and potential electoral support.

We are in a situation where the Tory government is on the rampage; where the SDP/Liberal alliance has won considerable public support; in which Labour Party membership and electoral support has fallen and where the trade union movement itself faces a degree of isolation.

There is, in this context, a real danger of a widening gulf opening up between left activists in the constituencies and the mass of affiliated members and even more so between these left activists and Labour voters, actual and potential.

The danger then arises that the Laboiur Party may lose the next general election, or find itself with no workable majority, or (through the freakishness of the electoral system) have a parliamentary majority but a distinctly minority vote; and in addition, enter the election with a Parliamentary Labour Party which will still be predominantly Centre-Right.

Those who believe that the leadership battle is over-riding may also be inclined to believe that therefore the coming general election is not critical. They argue that the leadership battle should be pressed forward at all costs and by all means (a view held most strongly by Trotskyist groups and an issue currently dividing left groups in the Labour Party). Their argument is that only if the leadership is won can the party fight on a completely different basis in the future; and there is indeed, past experience that coming elections have been used by the right wing to drown the battle over policies and leadership. Those who follow the third (and ultra-left perspective) go further and argue that it is not only necessary to get rid of the Right and Centre elements but that the 'soft left' is an even greater danger and in fact is the main enemy (just as, at a much earlier stage in the history of Communist Parties, left wing social democracy was regarded in this way).

Electoral prospects

The left could make no bigger mistake than to write off the significance of the coming general election. Failure to defeat Thatcherism and the Tory Party and register large gains for the Labour Party will open the way to measures which will weaken the labour and trade union movement and inflict further defeats on the people in all areas of life. The labour movement could be set back not for one parliamentary term but for decades. To miscalculate the political level not only of the electorate generally but of actual and potential Labour voters will destroy Labour's electoral base. The assumption some make, that the people will automatically support the left policies put forward by a changed leadership is mistaken.

If therefore the second strategic view is pursued without grasping the real nature of the problems now faced by the Labour Party, the party itself will be destroyed as an alliance or coalition of broad forces and so too will its mass support, even that which it now has. Instead of demonstrating its ability to become a major force challenging Thatcherism it will be reduced to a small minority party (with 10-20% of the votes, or perhaps less).

Some who share the second strategic view may seek support from the experience of the French Socialist Party's electoral victory, but there is no real comparison. The forces of the Left within Britain are very small compared with those in France. A mass Communist Party has been operating for decades; within the Socialist Party the forces of the Left are numerous and well entrenched. The Mitterrand victory was the outcome of a prolonged and gathering struggle against the domination of French politics by bourgeois parties for most of the post war period, whereas the Labour Party has formed governments for about half the years since 1945. And of course, the political traditions and culture of Britain and France are entirely different.

The point I am trying to make is that the Left must understand that 'capturing' the leadership and putting forward the most socialist policies the Left can come up with, is not itself a strategy but a recipe for failure.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Labour and the unions

I stated earlier that some who support the second strategic view also believe that the trade unions are an obstacle to the socialist transformation of the Labour Party and it is to this point I wish now to return. Yes, it is true that trade unions in pursuing their functions, cannot and should not be themselves political parties. Nevertheless, it is worth at this stage making two points. One is that the broad lefts within the unions have been an important factor in the fight to democratise the Labour Party (a point well understood by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy). And in an even more basic way, the crisis that has been building up for the right wing in the Labour Party arises from the fact that their trade union base, which was their main support, had become insecure. The radical character of the 1973 Labour Party programme, for instance, owed much to the ability of the Left within the party to win support from powerful circles in sections of the trade union leadership.

The British trade union movement is almost unique in that it is organised around a single centre (the TUC), and that the political affiliations of unions are, where they have them, entirely to the Labour Party and to no other political party, and that the TUC as the central body representing the unions, has important organised liaison with the Labour Party executive as in the TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee. The Labour Party is thus uniquely connected with organised workers in a way which does not exist within its individual membership. Such a structure creates a powerful transmission mechanism. Of course, what is transmitted and in which direction is critical but that will be determined by struggle. Some of those who hold to the second strategic view also believe that trade union affiliation is an obstacle to the rapid transformation of the Labour Party and want to sever the organised connection. To dismantle the transmission mechanism is surely in British conditions, an act of political irresponsibility.

Indeed, the trade unions connect the Labour Party with the working class in a way which the party's individual membership could not begin to do as an analysis of the social composition of that membership would surely show.

If the connections between the Labour Party and the unions change, all else in British politics will change. As it is, there are changes in the composition of the labour force with corresponding changes in trade union organisation. The balance between white collar and other unions is shifting and in the case of the former, whilst the TUC has grown in attractiveness, the Labour Party has not. Far reaching and swift changes within the party not accompanied by shifts in consciousness amongst masses of trade unionists must automatically contribute to the danger that it will cease to appear capable of forming an alternative government. In these circumstances, political divisions amongst unions will grow; organised power blocks of right-wing led unions (already visible) will develop more strongly; the TUC, not now very robust, would be further weakened and the possibility exists of some unions rethinking their Labour Party affiliation and weakening their links.

Of course, the current reaction of the leadership in the trade union movement is to see that the Labour Party acts in a way which they believe will allow the party to have the chance of electoral victory, especially in the light of the SDP attitude to trade union law reform. But if they fail we must not assume they will all carry on in the same old way.

It is true that the links between the party and the unions present many problems and anomalies, especially those thrown up in the contest for the Deputy Leadership and I, for one, have no neat answer. But the Left must have, as part of its strategy, a corresponding one for shifting the direction of the trade union movement,

LONDON LABOUR BRIEFING

Reporting London's news — and making it!

Copies from 23 Leghorn Road, London NW10. Tel. 01-961 3803
Enclose 40p (including p + p) for single issues.
£4.50 annual subscription

LABOUR—TAKE THE POWER!

CAPITAL & CLASS

Capital and Class is the journal of the Conference of Socialist Economists. It is published three times a year The contents of the journal encompass theoretical debate, concrete analysis, discussion on socialist strategy, an archive section, and reviews. Recent issues have included papers on Marxist state theory, the family wage, housing policy, industrial democracy.

CSE, 55 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X 0AE.

The Socialist Society
c/o 7 Carlisle Street, London W.1. Telephone 01 734 8501

The Socialist Society is a non-sectarian organisation for socialist education, debate, research and propaganda. It aims to break down the division between activists and intellectuals, and to make socialism 'the commonsense of our age'.

'The Socialist Society... for the re-creation of a socialist culture'

Raymond Williams

'The Socialist Society is most needed in the labour movement. We desperately need a socialist alternative perspective'

Tony Benn

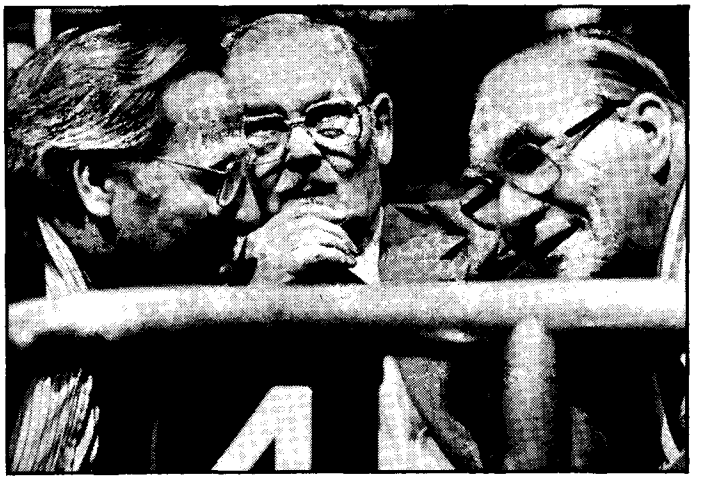
NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
_____
PHONE _____

I agree with the aims of the Socialist Society, please enrol me as
☐ a founding member (12, £4 unwaged)
☐ a sponsoring member (£50)
Trade union, journal, organisation

Main areas of interest

(Make cheques payable to 'The Socialist Society')

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



enabling it to play a more leading role amongst working people, overcoming its relative isolation. I believe that the political and ideological battle for change in the unions is better fought in the context of organic links between the unions and the Labour Party, involving the unions in policy formation and the selection and reselection of Parliamentary candidates.

My criticism of the second strategic view is not meant to detract in any way from the positive achievements and contribution made by those sections of the Labour Left holding this view. Indeed the entire Left is deeply indebted to them. But the weaknesses of this second view threatens to undermine not only future advances but existing achievements.

The criticisms I have made are even more true of the third and ultra-left view. Such a view, if it prevailed, would completely marginalise the Labour Party in British politics.

The fourth view

I think it is also the case that through this critique the argument has at the same time been presented for the fourth view. I wrote earlier that the *status quo* cannot and must not be maintained; the advances can only be defended by developing and deepening them. However, the transformation of the Labour Party and of political consciousness cannot be accomplished 'overnight'; no political paratroopers can capture it for the Left. The task is not to destroy the alliances which constitute the Labour Party and its electoral base but to shift their centres of gravity to the left as part of a combined struggle to change popular and working class consciousness.[1] That also imposes on the Labour Party the need to create a powerful mass movement for the defeat of Thatcherism and the Tory government and for the radical policies adopted by recent Labour Party Conferences.

In a more general sense one could put the tasks of the Left in the following way. First, to develop its struggle for leadership within the party in a way which establishes and extends alliances and recognises the existing levels of understanding. This must mean beginning to formulate a coherent strategic perspective which can defeat not only the perspective of the Right but also that of Militant and other Trotskyist groupings.

Second, to recognise and work on the basis that this struggle can only be carried forward in cooperation with forces in the trade union movement. And third, that the left must assist the Labour Party to develop mass politics and campaigning as Peter Hain and others continually and correctly insist.

But this approach is also too narrow. For one thing, significant movements exist outside of the Labour Party (the women's movement and CND are two of the most important); and there is a capacity for other democratic and popular movements. Unfortunately, there is a deeply held and dangerous idea even amongst large sections of the Labour Left, that the Labour Party possesses some kind of monopoly-role in relation to such movements. The Labour Party will grow by serving such movements as well as by expressing their demands. The autonomy of such movements is crucial to their development.

The task is not to destroy the alliances which constitute the Labour Party and its electoral base but to shift their centres of gravity to the left

But it is surely also clear from the experience of the Left in the past and now, that the task of formulating and working for a valid strategic perspective cannot be carried out by or within the Labour Party alone. The possibility of other forces contributing (apart from those movements already mentioned earlier) can be seen in the response to the formation of the Socialist Society which involves Labour Party members and many who are non-aligned. Much more critical is the position of the Communist Party itself, its theoretical journal and daily paper. The Communist Party has made a major contribution to strategic thinking for the movement as a whole. Even though its programme *The British Road To Socialism* needs development because of further changes in British politics, it still contains the most fruitful approach to an overall socialist strategy. And in addition, the Communist Party has a concept of political action which is needed by the movement as a whole.

The Left must break with narrrow and sectarian notions of what constitutes political leadership and to this the Communist Party can make a vital contribution.

The concept which the entire forces of the Left must get to grips with is the building of what Gramsci called an historic block; an alliance of forces in which the Labour Party would be a major component and which would be based not on the lowest common denominator but offer a dynamic prospect, shifting the entire structure towards socialist transformation.

Crucial problems now face the Left. The elements within it are now obliged to take stock of where they are and where they are going.

Vision must fuse with realism if we are to pluck victories from the jaws of defeat. □

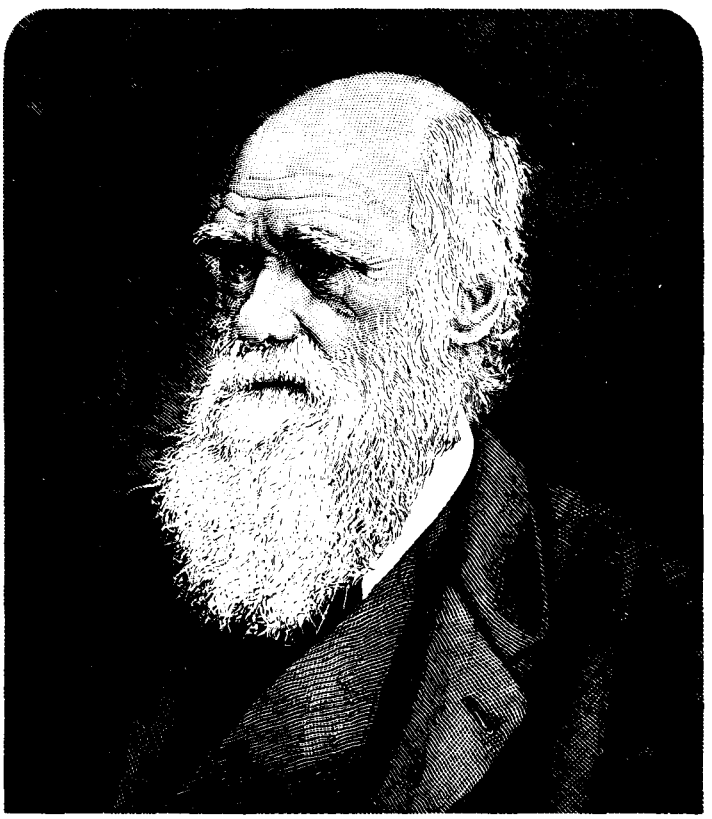
[1] See also Perry Anderson's essay *'Problems of Socialist Strategy'* in *Towards Socialism* (Ed Anderson and Blackburn, Fontane, 1965) which looks towards a socialist party as having the capacity to build not a coalition which changes little, but in the Gramsci sense, a historic block the unity of which would rest on 'an ascending integration.'

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Moral Majority suffered a major defeat in the recent US trial. But it is not good enough for Marxists to rally behind the scientific establishment.

Robert M Young

The Darwin Debate



In the centenary year of Darwin's death there seems to be almost as much furore as there was on the publication of his *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. Darwinism was accused of atheism, materialism and socialism — then as now. This in spite of the facts: Darwin was a theist (he was buried in Westminster Abbey) and rejected any connection between his views and socialism or political issues of any kind. The relation between biology and politics remains a vexed question for socialists. It involves a complex set of issues with boundaries which are not at all obvious or easy to draw in the present any more than they were in Victorian times.

In the recent Arkansas case, the issues weren't as clear as they were in 1859 or even in the 1925 'Monkey Trial' in Dayton, Tennessee, where Clarence Darrow, the great defender of socialists, Wobblies and anarchists, managed to win a moral victory for a high school teacher, John Scopes. Scopes had illegally taught evolutionism — the Darwinian idea that 'man, along with other living organisms descended from lower forms by wholly natural processes. The Little Rock, Arkansas case pitted the liberal scientific establishment against a thinly-veiled version of religious fundamentalism — beliefs in the literal truth of the Bible. The veil was required because the US constitution separates church and state, thereby making it illegal to teach religion as part of the school curriculum. The religious view was therefore presented as 'creation science', which was said to need equal time with scientific evolutionism. In effect, the book of Genesis was to be taught *as* science, on a par with what the conventional scientific texts say. In reality, creation science is based on the Christian view of God as the Creator and is an attack on science in general — biology (life science), geology (earth science), paleontology (the study of fossils) and cosmology (the study of the history and structure of the universe). Creation science presents as facts a separate ancestry for humans and other animals, a worldwide flood, sudden creation of the universe from nothing. The 'facts' of creation science tell us that the age of the earth is about 10,000 years — remarkably consistent with the biblical calculation — while the scientific consensus suggests that the earth is about 4.5 thousand million years old.

The Creationists

It is a familiar tactic for objectors to a scientific theory to take the gaps in the evidence and the unexplained phenomena more seriously than the positive evidence and range of phenomena which the theory does account for. Evolutionists claim to explain the gaps in the fossil record by the wearing away of the evidence by aeons of time, and some scientists are beginning to have their own doubts about the smooth continuity of evolutionary change. The creationists say that where the evidence is silent, nature points upwards to the Deity for the explanation of apparent, sudden discontinuities in the record. The Arkansas case was even more confusing since a distinguished astronomer and co-worker with Sir Fred Hoyle, Professor Chandra Wickramasinghe (of University College, Cardiff), appeared for the scientific creationists and argued that life came to earth from outer space and further that there has to have been a creator. The most eloquent of the scientific professoriate won hands down in the face of all this prevarication and confusion and persuaded the judge that creation science isn't science at all, but a mask for religion, and that the law which gave equal time to it was therefore unconstitutional. There will certainly be appeals as far as the US Supreme Court.

What are we to make of all this? Who are the white hats? There is no doubt that the advocates of creation science are ultra-conservative — part of the American New Right which makes Reagan look progressive by comparison. The creationists are worried about social instability and about sin. Biblical literalism is the first defence against modern thought, while evolutionism is seen as the central challenge to the biblical foundation of traditional values. One commentator on these issues said, 'Creationists relate evolution to everything from communism to the decline of the family to — at one time —

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

streaking.' It would be easy to conclude that these are merely enemies of socialism — obscurantists, flat earthers, rednecks, demagogues. They are all of those, but not, even so, unworthy of a second thought. Some of the enemies of fundamentalism are also enemies of the Left — sexploitation, the liberal consensus and, at the scientific level, sociobiology — the study of animal social behaviour, often making extrapolations to 'instinctive' behaviour in humans. Of course political positions opposed to the same thing can still be opposed to each other. It would be silly to suggest that the Left and the New Right are in coalition in opposing common enemies. But the point is worth dwelling on.

Historical background

Protestant fundamentalism has some of its historical roots in opposition to the territorial claims of science to explain the earth, life, human nature and society. In the early 19th century, fundamentalists dug their heels in and defended a value system which was under threat from geology, evolutionism, and deterministic psychology. They argued for the special creation and special value of life, humanity, free will. Human charity and responsibility were being defended against the onward march of science and technology, and the most rapacious period of urbanisation and the industrial revolution. A special basis for human dignity was being defended in the face of mechanical materialism in science, technology and industry. These protests were founded on a defence of the literal truth of the Bible as the divinely inspired word of God. But they had affinities with the protests of others who opposed the dehumanisation of industry, eg Thomas Carlyle in *Signs of the Times,* and of course Marx and Engels.

Marx and Engels didn't have a simple view on Darwinism. Their positions varied from Marx calling Darwin's theory 'a natural-scientific basis for the class struggle in history' to Engels saying that the whole Darwinist teaching of the struggle for existence ...ly a transfer from society to living ...Hobbes' doctrine of a war of all ... and of the bourgeoise economic ...f competition' — 'a conjuror's ... his speech at Marx's grave, Engels ...ist as Darwin discovered the law of ...ment of organic nature, so Marx dis... he law of development of human history.' There are three separate views here — a 'basis', a 'trick', and an analogy. Nor was the history of religious fundamentalism unequivocally opposed to the new industrial order. One shouldn't forget that the same fundamentalism was invoked to induce deference and work discipline in the form of Methodism, as EP Thompson shows in *The Making of the English Working Class.*

Deference to science

I'm trying to show that in the past as well as the present, the battlelines which are of interest to Marxists are not easy to draw. In the current controversy it would seem obvious to side with the scientists against the creationists, but the situation isn't so tidy. There is a long tradition on the Left of deference to natural science and of looking to it to provide guides for socialist theory and practice — as though scientific priorities, categories and patronage didn't come from general social values in the first place. As Bukharin pointed out, the practice of getting scientific knowledge is the practice of material labour carried on in a particular form of investigating nature. Science is not self-sufficient, but part of the general process of production.

The resonances between scientific concepts and social categories are very obvious when we consider some of the working vocabulary of liberal theory and of biological reductionism, which offers the instinctive behaviour of ants, geese, chickens, chimps and baboons as the basis for many aspects of what we do as 'naked apes'. Here is a list of terms drawn from the arguments in EO Wilson's *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* — division of labour (sexual and task), hierarchy, competitiveness, domination/submission, peck order, aggression, selfishness/altruism, rank, caste, role, worker, slave, soldier, queen, host, harem, promiscuous, mob, combat, spite, bachelor, jealousy, territoriality, leadership, indoctrinability, elites. Looking a bit wider to Richard Dawkin's *The Selfish Gene* we find cheat, sucker, grudger; wider still we find nepotism, philandering, rape. As Engels said of such ways of interpreting nature: 'When this conjuror's trick has been performed, the same theories are transformed back again from organic nature into history, and it is now claimed that their validity as eternal laws of human society has been proved.' Liberal versions of biological reductionism such as those expressed in sociobiology and ethology (the study of animal behaviour) are indeed taken up by elitists, eg, Professor Eysenck's belief in inherited levels of mental ability, and these as well as other biological studies of behaviour are used by racists, for example in National Front literature. They provide 'scientific evidence' in support of their reactionary social policies. Studies of other organisms are invoked to explain the limits of human social life and to provide subtle justifications for pessimism about human nature and society.

the book of Genesis was to be taught as science, on a par with what the conventional scientific texts say

Evolutionism and Marxism.

This is not to say that biology and evolutionism have no relevance for Marxists. Aspects of evolutionism are perfectly consistent with Marxism. The explanation of the origins of humankind and of mind by purely natural forces was, and remains, as welcome to Marxists as to any other secularists. The sources of value and responsibility are not to be found in a separate mental realm or in an immortal soul, much less in the inspired words of the Bible. Marxism is a 'this-worldly' rather than an 'other-worldly' philosophy. It is also a materialism with a definition of matter and its potential which is much richer than the impoverished idea of matter left over in the mind-body dualism which puts all meaning and purpose in the minds of God and people. Marx stressed neither mind nor matter, but the engagement between people and nature — a transformative relationship based on human labour. Labour is neither nature nor culture but their matrix. Human nature is not an eternal essence or a consequence of biological inevitabilities, but an ensemble of social relations — an historical product and an historical project. So, while the naturalism, materialism and this-worldliness of Darwin-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Scientific Monkey: 'Cut it off short, Tim; I can't afford to await developments before I can take my proper position in Society.'

From *Harper's Bazaar*, 16 September 1876.

ian evolution are acceptable to Marxists, this does not mean that natural explanations take over from historical ones. Put another way, in Marxist approaches to humanity, genetics doesn't replace human labour. *Homo faber* — 'man' the maker — does not bow to biological inevitability or to seeking out evolutionary bases for accepting the social *status quo*: 'You can't change human nature'.

There has been a recent revival of advocacy of close attention to the biological limits of human nature among some Marxists. It has been pointed out that we need to root our conceptions of the human species in biological givens. This is a salutary warning against the romantic belief that we are free spirits and can decide our futures by free choice and by just trying harder. However, it can be argued that it refers matters to 'first nature' (biology) which are not in the domain of deterministic laws, but which are attributable to 'second nature' (deeply embedded social learning). 'Second nature' is very refractory and difficult to change, but it is not as much so as genuine biological givens like eye colour or skin pigmentation. Another current within Marxism which stresses the alliance of its theoretical basis with science is the defence of aspects of philosophical 'realism' — with a more or less simple one-to-one correspondence between the external world and our experiences of it. Still another current which allies Marxism closely with scientific thinking is the revival of 'dialectical materialism' which takes Marxist categories and argues that they characterise the deepest reality in the natural world eg change as a dialectical process, the transformation from quantity into quality. These currents — stressing the biological roots of human nature, and the philosophical ideas of realism and dialectical materialism — tempt socialists to think that there can be no rift between the claims of working scientists and politically correct thinking.

> Darwin was also a person of his times and held views on other races which would not be acceptable to Marxists

It is difficult, however, to connect these philosophical arguments with the political struggles of working biologists. Biological research, like all other practices, arises in a social order and reflects the priorities and assumptions of that order. This is obvious in the case of EO Wilson, and also in IQ studies, but it is not so obvious in the case of Darwin, whose philosophy of nature was, even so, very much part of a model of progress through struggle — competition, pain, hunger, famine — which he drew from Malthusianism in formulating his theory of evolution by natural selection. When he turned to human beings, Darwin was also very much a person of his own times and held views on other races which would not be acceptable to Marxists.

Terms of the debate

The people who took part in the 19th century Darwinian debate, the 1925 Scopes trial and the 1982 Little Rock trial, were all taking up positions in an ideological debate on the terrain of bourgeois society, and all are easily localised on a familiar un-Marxist political continuum. The most eloquent defender of scientific evolutionism, Stephen J Gould, is an avowedly non-Marxist radical — on the left of the scientific/political consensus but working well and truly within it. It is important to be aware that Marxists working in the scientific and political struggles in America find that the theory and practice of people occupying that niche reflect a different conception of nature, human nature and political struggle from their own.

Put another way, it would be a mistake, be it one often made by the Left, to side uncritically with the scientific position in the Little Rock Trial in opposition to the creation scientists. Given that choice, one may well be inclined to oppose equal time for creation science, but as so often happens, that leaves us appearing to advocate a position which offers more to an enlightened version of the *status quo* than to socialist priorities and the potential role of science in socialist society. That question is not one on the agenda of the liberals and radicals in biology and the study of animal behaviour.

I would say, then, that no Marxist should want to look to biology for a guide to the formulation of social and political goals and strategies, ie, to the limits of human nature. It seems no more fruitful to look to natural science than to the Bible for justification of ethical, social and political beliefs. The 'science' which is most relevant to Marxist approaches to these matters is the science of history. There are of course both natural and human aspects of history, but these must be seen as mutually conditioned, whatever the scientific creationists, the scientific evolutionists, or the scientific Marxists say. □

Louise Michel
Biography of a revolutionary of the Paris Commune
Edith Thomas. £5.95 (+87p p&p)

Radical Priorities
Noam Chomsky. £4.95 (+87p p&p)
A new selection of Chomsky's writings

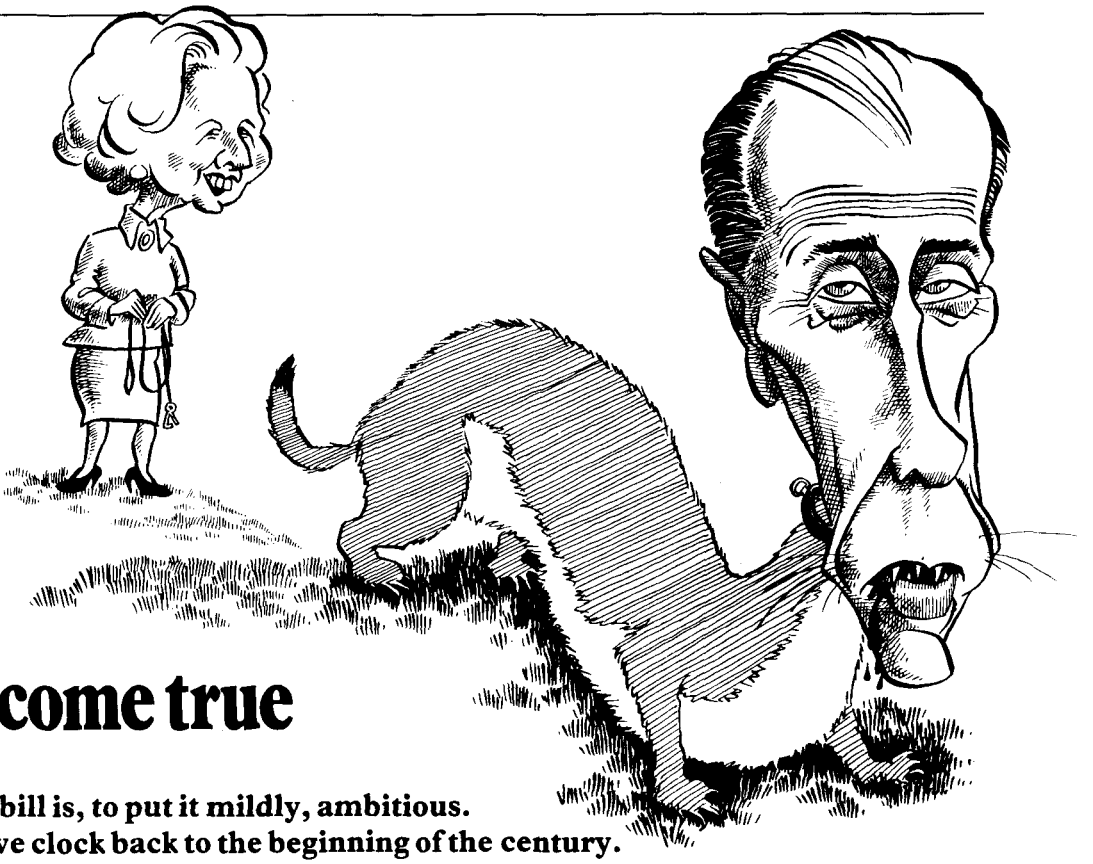
Wholesale terms available

Housmans
Housmans, 5, Caledonian Rd. London N1. 01-837 4473.

German in the GDR
Outstanding new facilities for youth and student groups to **study in Greifswald, Erfurt or Dresden.** 15, 18 or 21 days daily tuition for four hours, full board and extensive programmes of excursions, visits and contacts with the new Germany from only **£212 for 18 days fully inclusive Dresden and Berlin.**

Progressive Tours Ltd.
12 Porchester Place, Marble Arch, London W2 2BS
Telephone 01-262 1676. Telex 25135.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



John Minnion

Christian Tyler

Tebbit's Law: a Tory dream come true

The Tories' new trade union bill is, to put it mildly, ambitious. Its aim is to turn the legislative clock back to the beginning of the century.

Ever since the ignominious collapse of the 1971 Industrial Relations Act, a measure designed to work a wholesale transformation of the British industrial relations scene by means of the statute book, the Conservative Party has been obsessed by the need to 'do something about the unions'. It is therefore tempting to interpret Mr Norman Tebbit's Employment Bill, like that of Mr Prior before him, merely as an act of political exorcism to rid the party of an incubus.

There are indeed reasons for seeing the two measures as purely tactical, narrowly political, expedients which have no deeper ideological purpose. The first Bill, for example, tackled a number of specific issues like picketing which happened to be topical when the Conservative Opposition was writing its manifesto for the 1979 general election. It was not the considered result of any deep analysis of trade union power (Mr Prior's Green Paper was published *after* his Bill, not before it). The second Bill has been shaped largely by the gut feeling of certain vociferous Tory backbench MPs and backwoods industrialists.

There is something *ad hoc* about the whole business. Even ministerial arguments for the legislation have been confusing. Sometimes, we are told, it is a matter of principle (dealing with the closed shop); at other times it is not principle but the need to curb particular 'abuses' of their power by trade union leaders. Or again, we are told that the Bills are first steps towards some ultimate framework of a labour law that all sections of society will come to judge as fair and reasonable. What is this framework? The 1971 Act all over again, or something else? Or we are told that the real purpose is an economic one, to create more employment. It is by no means a simple matter to discern, by looking at the contents of the two Bills in isolation, just what is being attempted. Of course electoral popularity has something to do with it; so has the feeling among employers that the balance of power in industry has moved away from them and to the unions (although we have heard much less about that in the last 18 months of economic recession).

The picture is even more confused when we look at the reaction of the protagonists. The Tory Right is still apparently unsatisfied, the SDP has largely backed the Tebbit Bill while complaining that it contains the wrong remedies. Employers, while publicly welcoming the proposals, are privately deeply divided about the wisdom of using the law at all.

Congress House and the general secretaries have had no such qualms. In their eyes, the Tebbit Bill — even more than the Prior Bill — is quite simply a direct assault on trade union organisation which if successful will permanently weaken their ability to represent people at work. The TUC's problem is not how to characterise the Bill, but how to fight it effectively.

Yet it is important to look at all the evidence in order to understand why the unions are engaged in more than a ritual dispute with the present government, to understand what the real battle is about. This article is an attempt to show that the Government has taken up the legislative hammer, not in order to knock sense into British industrial relations, but in order to take the shortest route to reasserting political control over a still formidable extra-parliamentary institution. It may be that Mrs Thatcher and Mr Tebbit do not themselves see this as a trial of strength over political terrain: but that is what it will be. What they *do* know is that they have a fair chance of winning.

The economic argument

The issue is not put so starkly, of course; that would be unacceptable even in contemporary British politics. Ministers hate the term 'union-bashing'. They talk instead about the economic purpose of the measures. They are designed, it is said, to ensure continuity of production by instilling greater discipline on the shopfloor and greater 'responsibility' in trade union head offices. They are designed to rid industry of restrictive practices and old-fashioned attitudes, and to ease the labour market by prising open the closed shop and its less formal equivalents. They are to correct a growing imbalance as between employer and employed, and they are to lift from the back of the employer some of the costs and penalties incurred in the hiring and firing of labour. All this, the argument

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

goes, will serve to create more jobs in the long term.

Such arguments, wielded it must be said with more conviction by Mr Prior than by his successor, tend to disappear once the drafting actually begins. Ambitious aims of this kind cannot, of course, be translated into suitable legal terminology. There are limits to what even the most sympathetic judiciary can do by remote control. The economic case is convincing probably only to those economists whose analysis begins with the concept of 'trade union monopoly power'. But the most cursory glance at the two Bills themselves and at the manner of their birth is enough to demonstrate that the economic justification is a frail one.

This is not to say that if the Employment Acts are systematically taken up and used by employers and if the trade unions, despite the TUC's strategy, fail utterly to mobilise against them then a permanent weakening of trade union organisation will not occur. And if British trade unionism were permanently weakened, how many of the present Cabinet would be distressed? Trade union leaders and the people with whom they negotiate are wont to say that trade unions are a fact of life: they are here to stay so we'd best get on with making the system work. But they forget that in the United States, for example, trade union membership has fallen dramatically over the years to around 25% of the working population. American trade unions have largely failed to keep up with the movement of US industry from the North-East to the boom areas of the South and West. In the 'right to work' States of the union, it is the employer's right not to tolerate trade unions. The 'right to work' philosophy is attractive to the present Conservative leadership.

Mr Tebbit has concentrated his fire in two areas — the closed shop and trade union funds

In a small island like Britain that kind of geographical discrimination is probably impossible. But suppose trade unions could be regulated by statute to the point where they ceased to be able to represent the workers who now belong to them, then the workers would look elsewhere for answers to their grievances. Unofficial trade unions, working entirely outside the law, might begin to spring up as they do in the Latin American military regimes. Is there any answer to that kind of anarchy but further repression by the authorities? No British government sets consciously down that path, but then politicians do not necessarily consider the long term consequences of attractive short term solutions.

The Tebbit Bill

What do the proposed reforms themselves tell us about their purpose?

Mr Tebbit has concentrated his fire in two areas, ignoring a mass of other suggestions from employers about how industrial discipline could be tightened up. The chosen areas are the closed shop and trade union funds.

The Employment Bill, 1982, would raise to extraordinary levels the minimum compensation to which a worker will be entitled if he is unfairly dismissed from his job for refusing to join a union in a closed shop. Compensation would be measured in terms not of hundreds of pounds but in thousands or even tens of thousands. This measure immediately creates a two-tier system of awards for unfair dismissal. In crude terms, you get a lot of money if you are sacked for objecting to closed shops, and not very much if you are unfairly sacked for any other reason.

Claims of unfair dismissal will be automatically justified if the closed shop in question has not been tested by secret ballot within five years preceding the disgruntled worker's appeal to the industrial tribunal. And in order to pass the test, the closed shop will have had to command the support of 80% of the workers covered by it, or 85% of those who took part in the ballot.

Mr Tebbit has built substantially on Mr Prior's Act, which extended the grounds on which a worker could object to being part of a closed shop. The Labour government, in repealing the 1971 Act, had made closed shops lawful again, but stipulated that workers with religious beliefs that forbade their membership of trade unions should be free to object. That is, an employer could not fairly sack a worker whose objection was on religious grounds. Mr Prior's Act widened the conscience clause to cover any 'deeply held personal conviction'. It also enabled workers to object to being members of a particular union as well as unions in general.

In addition, the 1980 Act gave existing non-members the right to stay out of the union after a closed shop agreement was signed. Non-members were covered if the closed shop agreement had not been preceded by a secret ballot in which 80% voted for it.

At the same time, Mr Tebbit is asking Parliament to let him pay retrospective compensation to an estimated 400 people who lost their jobs from closed shops during the 1974-79 Labour government when the narrower grounds for objection were in force. This quite exceptional measure (described by some trade union leaders as a 'publicity stunt') seeks to treat those people as if the 1980 Act had been the law of the land in the preceding six years.

A related measure is the outlawing of commercial contracts and tenders that specify that the work is to be handled by union labour. A crucial addition has been made. Clause 11 of the Bill makes it unlawful for trade unions to put pressure on employers to operate union-only contracts. Unions and workers would lose their immunity from civil court action if they blacked non-union work or refused to work alongside non-union labour. This part of the Bill has received little attention so far, but has immense implications for workers on construction and civil engineering sites.

Trade union funds

But the central plank of the Bill is its removal of the historic immunity enjoyed by trade union funds. Once the Bill becomes law, sometime around July and subject to any amendments at committee stage, it will be open to employers to sue not only individual workers or trade union officials for unlawful breaches of contract but also trade unions themselves. The scale of maximum damages that a court can award has been set at £10,000 for unions of less than 5,000 members, ranging up to £250,000 for unions of over 100,000 members.

The significance of this measure is obvious. Employers have rarely resorted to the courts to sort out their industrial relations problems — though the practice is more popular in some industries than others (the newspaper business, for example). It may be worth the employer's while to go for an injunction against named individuals in the hope of stopping the industrial action complained of: it has not hitherto been worth his while to see the case through to full trial because the damages he could extract from an individual are not worth having. But once trade union funds are exposed the game is worth the candle: and how many successful suits could even a rich union like the Transport and General Workers' withstand?

To put this measure into some perspective: unions lost their vulnerability to criminal prosecutions with the 1875 Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act, the measure which first introduced the so-called 'golden formula' that permits industrial action 'in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute'. The Taff Vale Railway case of 1901 demonstrated that the immunity was not as watertight as everybody assumed. The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants found itself paying £42,000 in damages to the railway company. This incident prompted the Trade Disputes Act of 1906 which

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

explicity conferred immunity on trade union funds. The situation remained virtually unaltered until the 1971 Act which repealed the 1906 Act but which re-enacted most of the immunities.

Mr Tebbit's Bill thus takes an historic step. At the same time, his Bill narrows still further the boundaries of lawful industrial action, and therefore increases the opportunities for successful litigation by employers.

The 1980 Act took several major steps down this road by creating the new legal concept of 'secondary' industrial action and 'secondary' picketing and making the two kinds of action unlawful. The 1982 Bill seeks to reinforce those limitations by redefining not only the type of *action* that you may lawfully take but also the type of *dispute* that you may legitimately pursue with industrial action. Once the Tebbit Bill becomes law, trade unionists (and now their unions too) will lose immunity from court action unless they can show that the dispute is not an inter-union one and can show that it is 'wholly or mainly' connected with terms and conditions of employment. It will become unlawful to stage sympathy action with workers abroad: trade union demonstrations against, for example, South African apartheid or boycotts mounted in solidarity with workers on strike in another country will not prevent a British employer taking unions to court.

These are the two main areas in which Mr Tebbit has taken action. His Bill, like Mr Prior's, also changes the rights of individual workers by limiting, for example, the eligibility of the individual to redundancy and maternity payments. But these are essentially administrative measures.

his Bill narrows still further the boundaries of lawful industrial action

photo: Laurie Sparham/Network

Prior and Tebbitt

The first of this Government's legislative thrusts against the unions — apart from the Hadmor case[1], still largely untested in the courts — was a somewhat peripheral, ambivalent affair. Mr Prior was plainly acting under the political imperative of tackling 'the union problem' as promised in the Conservatives' general election manifesto. Indeed the manifesto was extraordinarily explicit in the commitments it made to act on picketing, the closed shop, and welfare payments to strikers' families. But the Secretary of State for Employment did not get on with his Prime Minister. Furthermore, his own experience as Mr Heath's confidant during the fraught years of the 1971 legislation told him that Mrs Thatcher and the hawks on her shoulder were liable to try and go too far. He therefore offered, essentially, the manifesto minimum but said the measures could be seen as the first step towards gradual transformation of the whole legal framework. In other words, he seemed to be saying the party could have its 1971 Act back, provided it was ready to go slowly about it.

The 1980 Act was advertised as the correction of a number of specific abuses of trade union power. The measures were chosen either because they were topical (picketing during the lorry drivers' strike had dominated the headlines) or because they were age-old issues of 'principle' (the closed shop) untiringly pursued by the Conservative Party grass roots activists.

Having discharged his obligations, to the extent that he judged legislatively prudent and politically necessary, Mr Prior was content to let it go at that. The TUC protested that his redrawing of the boundaries of lawful action — in particular his artificial distinction between primary and secondary industrial action — would serve merely to worsen the industrial relations climate while at the same time undermining the right of workers to withdraw their labour. Mr Prior's critics within the Conservative Party were very far from satisfied. They were quite unable to see how the 1980 Bill would restore the balance of power in British industry, and the *Daily Express* christened him 'Pussyfoot Prior'.

Mainly in order to stem this further pressure both inside and outside the Cabinet, Mr Prior then embarked on the promised review of trade union immunities. The purpose of this exercise was to map out the terrain of possible future legislation — legislation that Mr Prior himself had no intention of sponsoring unless his hand was forced by another 'winter of discontent' like that which had helped the Tories back into office. His green paper on immunities, published in January 1981, did due homage to the backbench hawks but was really an eloquent restatement of the case for leaving the subject alone.

The debate slipped out of the headlines while employer organisations set about canvassing their members' views on what, if anything, the Government should do next in the legislative field. To no one's surprise, the broad conclusion of British industry, with the usual predictable exceptions, was that there were a number of other

[1]The House of Lords upheld the right of the ACTT to view the operations of a TV facility company as a threat to employees, and therefore as ground for a trade dispute.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

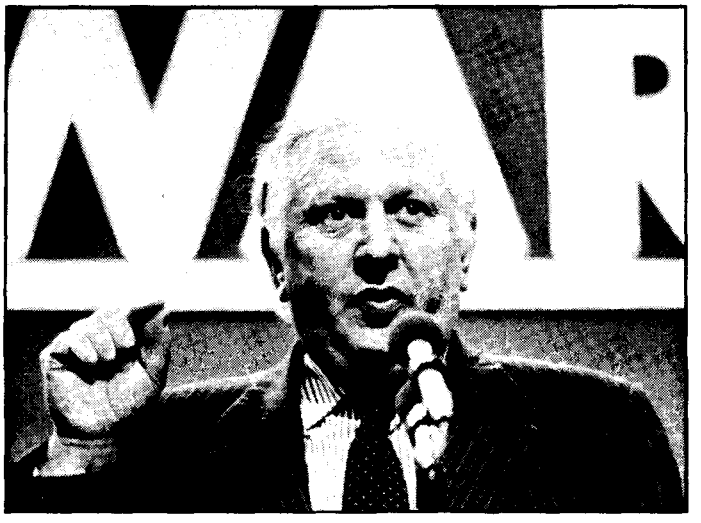


photo: Sheila Grav

Then came the reshuffle and Mr Prior was sent off to Northern Ireland to be replaced by the less amiable Mr Norman Tebbit

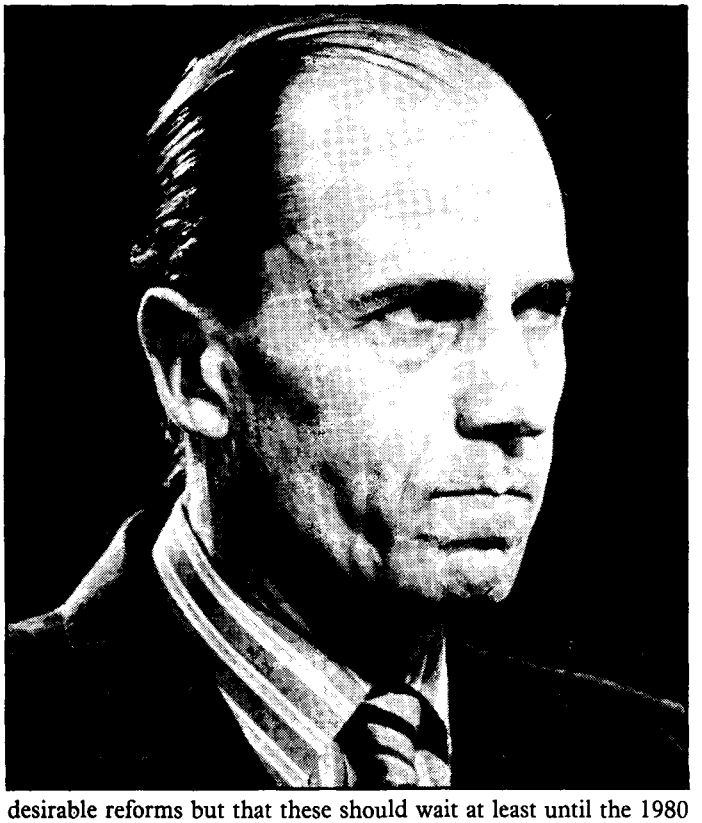


photo: Mike Abrahams/Network

desirable reforms but that these should wait at least until the 1980 Act had been given time to prove itself.

Then came the reshuffle and Mr Prior was sent off to Northern Ireland to be replaced by the less amiable Mr Norman Tebbit, a former airline pilot and official of the British Air Line Pilots Association (BALPA). He was put into the Department of Employment to pacify the snipers on the Tory backbenches and — so it seems — to quench Mrs Thatcher's thirst for some radical initiative. He duly obliged with the attack on trade union funds.

Mr Tebbit's elevation was the signal for a furious burst of activity from a right wing organisation held in little regard by the more sober mainstream of British business — the Institute of Directors. The Institute, unashamedly political in its aims and assiduous in its cultivation of the backbench dogmatists, set about stealing the CBI's act as the voice of British employers and providing some real industrial thrust for the second Bill that finally emerged two months ago.

The motives for Tebbit

The difference between Mr Tebbit's Bill and Mr Prior's lies not merely in the extent to which the former intrudes into the unions' historic immunities. The circumstances of its birth have been totally dissimilar, suggesting the motivation is much deeper. The Prior legislation came shortly after a general election victory and a campaign in which the (still undefined) question of trade union power had been a major — if not *the* major — issue. The strikes of 1978 and 1979 had gravely embarrassed Mr Callaghan's Government. Indeed there were unconfirmed rumours that unless the TUC issued new instructions to unions on how to behave (which it duly did in the so-called 'concordat') then the Labour Cabinet might itself have to consider legislating. It was clear enough to the Conservative Party strategists that Labour's failure to 'deal with the unions' in the eyes of the electorate meant they had to take positive, visible action. And that could only mean legislation.

But what was Mr Tebbit's mandate? His Bill comes at a time when economic recession, aided by the Government's own policies, has taken its own highly effective toll of trade union organisation, bargaining power and political influence. The strike figures had fallen dramatically over the previous 12 months from 12 million working days lost in 1980 to 4 million in 1981. And the loss of union membership because of the labour shake-out and company closures had bitten deep into trade union bank accounts. There have been few major strikes: the civil service dispute was long and unpopular but scarcely a manifestation of gross trade union power. The Aslef strikes over flexible rostering came too late to influence the climate ahead of the Bill — even if the Aslef dispute were at all relevant.

Mr Tebbit's own answer to the question of his mandate has been to point to the public opinion polls, which show that the unions are unpopular even, it would seem, among trade union members. But not even Mr Tebbit would argue that the unpopularity of trade unions is a sufficient explanation of his measures. His real case is that trade union leaders will be quite unable to convince their members that they are threatened by his Bill: and, indeed, the complicated legal issue of immunity is likely to pass over most heads. Not, perhaps, unless and until a union is threatened or bankrupted by damages will its members understand the force of Tebbit's law.

An even more convincing explanation for the 1982 Bill — and one that Mr Tebbit has hinted at — is that there will be no Labour government after the next election to repeal it. With the SDP apparently persuaded that legal reform is necessary, it would need a very startling electoral comeback by Labour to see the two Acts struck out as the 1971 Act was. Once over the hurdle of the next election, Tebbit's law will be well established. The longer it survives, the more acceptable it becomes. That is another reason why the TUC is so alarmed. Given the highly uncertain political situation, the unions' only hope of defeating the Act is to hit back so hard on the first occasion that an employer uses it that it is not used again, and to so dramatise its disruptive effect that repeal becomes the only way out. To get the reform off the statute book will probably entail not only breaking the law — which some union leaders have already told Parliament they will do — but boycotting the courts and bringing the law of the land into disrepute. If only in that sense, the battle will be deeply political, and its outcome highly uncertain.

Trade union power

At this point it is worth trying to get a little closer to the question of trade union power, whose misuse Mr Tebbit's Bill is supposed to be

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tackling. Unfortunately, the 'cure' begs the diagnosis. If industrial action were typically initiated by or even under the direct control of, trade union officials and general secretaries, then to expose central trade union funds to damages might be an appropriate disincentive to the wielding of the strike weapon.

But as has been pointed out again and again, British trade unions do not work like that. Trade union officials are representatives (however imperfectly elected); they do not control their members in the way that the Tebbit Bill implies they do. Nor, as any personnel director will tell you, can that kind of disciplinary relationship be magically legislated into existence. Indeed, in so far as the Bill itself attempts to define the vicarious liability of trade unions for the actions of their members it recognises that the 'problem' is not the unions, but the workers themselves. The Green Paper rehearsed this point quite succinctly. One of the arguments against exposing trade union funds, it said, was that 'because of the way British trade unions are organised and disputes arise, the effect of putting union funds at risk, far from making unions more disciplined organisations would be to encourage internal dissension, to weaken their internal authority and therefore threaten an increase in unofficial action.'

Either Mr Tebbit has misunderstood the *locus* of union power and chosen the wrong weapon for his declared purpose — to make industrial relations more orderly — or he has deliberately chosen to hit another target. Unable to legislate for good behaviour, he is more concerned to weaken the unions as institutions than to secure the co-operation of trade union members in the smooth running of industry.

The employers' role

Another clue to the purpose of the Tebbit Bill can be found in a still under-reported argument between and inside employer organisations. There is a sharp conflict between large and small employers, for example — between those who have long experience of dealing with trade unions and those who have not or who are simply anti-union. There is conflict too between the public welcome accorded the measures and private doubts as to the wisdom of the whole exercise.

Company directors who applaud Mrs Thatcher's ideology have applauded Mr Tebbit's Bill. Many would like to have seen it go further. But company personnel directors, even in firms not noted for being soft on unions, are extremely worried. Theirs is a pragmatic, rather than political concern. They are afraid of the industrial relations consequences of a new surge in litigation. They fear the small 'cowboy' employer who decides to sue for substantial damages and they fear the disaffected trade union member who secures national fame and a large sum of money for dropping out of a closed shop agreement.

In short, there are company managers too who see the Tebbit Bill as purely political: and if they would like to secure some long term negotiating advantage over the trade unions, they are equally convinced that changing the law is not the way to do it. It is worth remembering, for example, that the Engineering Employers Federation has been advocating a purely disciplinary measure which has nothing whatever to do with trade union immunities or trade union funds. The EEF wanted for employers the right to lay off without pay workers not immediately involved in a dispute at their own workplace. The proposal was well supported in Fleet Street editorial columns. There is no doubt that it would be a tough answer to selective strikes, for example. There is considerable doubt about its equity in law which is probably why it is not being enacted.

Another example of the tension between the Government's political purpose and the employers' pragmatism is the closed shop. Most employer bodies have dutifully declared their support for the Government's basic proposition — that the closed shop is a moral evil. But none will ask the Government to make it illegal because it suits them very well in practice. In this respect employers show a curious affinity with trade unionists. There are, even on the left of the trade union movement, those who find the concept of compulsory trade union membership repugnant, while encouraging their members to secure the 100% shop where they can. Indeed, for most unions the closed shop is as much a guarantee of subscription income as it is a bargaining weapon. In practice, closed shop agreements have tended to be liberal in their jurisdiction: determined 'nonners' are left alone until they actively agitate against the system.

Here is another example of management schizophrenia, or the Boardroom at odds with the personnel department. Closed shops may offend the libertarian principles of senior management; they suit the personnel department very well because they create stable bargaining units and incidentally reinforce the personnel function exercised by trade unionists in British industry.

In terms of hard cases, the evils of the closed shop do not amount to much. The number of occasions in which individuals suffer at the hands of the collective each year can be counted on the fingers of one hand. But politically the closed shop is, and is likely to remain, one of the burning issues. Therefore when Mr Tebbit comes forward with a Bill the bulk of whose clauses are concerned with the closed shop, and adds to that a proposal for retrospective compensation (an exceptional step in any context) it should be no surprise. But if the closed shop is so great an evil, why has it not simply been outlawed? That at least would be consistent.

The fact that many large employers do not like what Mr Tebbit has done may prove — as it did a decade ago — a weakness in the legislation. Because of new political circumstances it is unlikely to prove its undoing. The law has been designed in such a way as to encourage employers to use it: even if the CBI, the EEF or all the trade associations were privately to advise their members to leave well alone they could not conceivably prevent a *cause célèbre* being staged in the High Court.

> Once over the hurdle of the next election, Tebbit's law will be well established

Conclusion

Whether or not the Government's existing and proposed legal reforms add up to a coherent strategy must remain an open question. The arguments deployed for the measures may be contradictory and the choice of instruments somewhat arbitrary. But if the measures survive and even more if they become an accepted part of the employers' negotiating armoury, then the Government will be able justly to claim that it has opened a new chapter in British trade union history.

Assuming for a moment that the laws do stick, how much of a threat will they be? The closed shop exemption clause and compensation scheme could disrupt some workplaces, but are unlikely to pose a serious threat to union organisation itself: few closed shop agreements are in any case as strict as the Government's remedy implies. The procedures for setting them up and for reviewing them could well be ignored by both sides of industry.

More problematical for the unions will be the statutory proscription of action to prevent sub-contractors using non-union labour. This could certainly put a barrier in the way of winning formal recognition for trade unions, but it will apply mainly to those industries — like construction — where the unions have rarely managed to secure a strong foothold.

Much more serious are the new definitions of what constitutes

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lawful industrial action. For example, the borderline between 'primary' and 'secondary' action (except perhaps in the case of picketing) is legally difficult enough. Practically, it is even more obscure. But the courts will now be empowered to decide how far workers can go in applying economic sanctions against employers: the general supposition (based on the experience of Lord Dennings's judgments in the Court of Appeal) is that the line will be narrowly drawn indeed.

But the real crux of the legislation is the withdrawal of immunity for trade union funds. Unions will have a choice; either they give official support to their members in dispute (which enables them to exercise some control) and risk severe financial penalties; or they stand aside and cease to exercise their representative function for some members in order to save the rest of the members' money. They are either weakened financially or weakened industrially.

The TUC has already laid out an eight-point strategy for 'neutering' the law. Union leaders have declared themselves ready to go to jail; they have warned that their retaliation will be political in the same sense that the legislation is 'political'. But there is a difference between rendering the law inoperable by frightening employers into not using it, and actually defeating it. There may be no Labour government to come to the rescue this time. And given that some employer, somewhere, will sooner or later take a union to court for damages, there is no dodging the issue. The first few cases —perhaps even the very first case — will be an historic confrontation. The unions will be fighting to preserve the legal status they have enjoyed for most of the century. The Conservative Party will be poised to collect the prize it has waited for so long. □

"It may seem paradoxical to assert that fish are a means of production....."
Karl Marx 1867

We also give quotes... for badges, stickers and posters.
High quality, lowest prices
From the heart of the inner-city...
a workers' coop FLY PRESS AND BADGER LTD
52 Acre Lane, Brixton SW2 274-5181

National Union of Mineworkers
(Scottish Area)
call on the General Council of the TUC to rally all trade union forces for struggle against the Tebbit Bill and to withdraw from NEDDY to demonstrate complete opposition to Tebbit's laws.
Rally the movement!
Smash the Tebbit Bill!
Michael McGahey *president*
George Bolton *vice-president*
Eric Clarke *general secretary*

journeyman

REISSUED TO COINCIDE WITH THE RELEASE OF 'REDS'
Six Red Months in Russia
by Louise Bryant
The only woman journalist from the West to record those world-shattering events of 1917 and meet Russia's famous women revolutionaries.
16 pages photographs. £2.95

TO BE PUBLISHED IN APRIL
The Novel on Blue Paper
by William Morris
edited by Penelope Fitzgerald, unfinished and never published before. *Chapbook 6.* £1.95

The Twelve and the Scythians
by Alexander Blok
newly translated by Jack Lindsay, illustrated by Yuri Annenkov, and afterword by Yuri Molok. *Chapbook 8.* £1.75

The Time of the Toad
by Dalton Trumbo
first published by the Hollywood Ten.
Chapbook 12. £1.75

The Journeyman Press, 97 Ferme Park Road, London N8

NEW PAMPHLETS FROM THE COMMUNIST PARTY

TEBBIT'S BILL – KILL IT
by Mick Costello. 40p

'Tebbit's Bill is a vicious series of measures against organised labour ... the aim is to make unions docile or face bankruptcy ... in no other capitalist country this side of Chile and South Africa is such legislation in force or even proposed.'

The pamphlet, by the Communist Party's Industrial Organiser spells out the terms of the Bill and a strategy for defeating it.

CONDITION CRITICAL – PRIVATE MEDICINE & THE NHS
by Steve Iliffe. 50p

'Labour's Right has been too weak, and the Left too unrealistic, to prevent the growth of private medicine ... the NHS needs renewal, not just reinforcement ... a new health policy is needed, based on increased health spending, democratic involvement in NHS planning and administration, and a shift of resources into services based in the community.'

Both available now by post from Central Books, 14 The Leathermarket, London SE1 3ER (add 20p p&p), and from Communist Party and Left bookshops.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Paul Bew

The Irish Election

The Irish general election of February 1982 was, like that of June 1981, a very close run thing. This time the Fianna Fail opposition party emerged as the marginal victors with 81 seats — a gain of three. The partners in the governing Coalition Fine Gael (63 seats) and Labour (15 seats) narrow victors in June, were now the narrow losers. In the new Dail, as in the old, 'Independents' — but now with a rather different political complexion — held the balance of power.

The result was in one sense unsurprising. The coalition had been forced to go to the country on the basis of a socially regressive and generally harsh budget. At the same time, Fianna Fail had been hampered by the marked unpopularity of their leader, C J Haughey. The real surprise was the good showing of a group of left candidates, in particular that of Sinn Fein The Workers' Party. Few 'experts' had predicted this development. For example, the prestigious *Magill Book of Irish Politics,* published just before Christmas had stressed rather the vulnerability of the SFWP's one seat in the last Dail. In the event, the SFWP not only held this seat but gained two others. In general, their vote increased by 33%, a gain described as 'dramatic' by one of Dublin's most respected political writers. Similarly, Jim Kemmy, an Independent Socialist TD based in Limerick increased his vote by 50%. Even the most obtuse of commentators acknowledged that class had played an unusually important role in an Irish election. One writer 'Gulliver' in the *Sunday Press* observed, with some show of satisfaction: 'Left wing politics are becoming serious for the first time since the State was formed'.

The same article is, however, devoted mainly to 'puffing' the prospects of another Fianna Fail government. Indeed, a month previously 'Gulliver' — who in another guise once edited an edition of the *Best of Connolly* — had spoken mysteriously of 'subversive elements' in the media and elsewhere who were trying to undermine Irish political stability by attacking its mainstay, the Fianna Fail party. Such ambiguous comments are in fact an index of an important fact about Irish political life — the Fianna Fail party, for all its rather obviously 'bourgeois' nature, has managed to retain a 'progressive' image throughout much of its history. It has rarely lost the ability to project itself as *the* radical populist party. In this election, it has instinctively played that card again; rhetorically at least, Haughey has stressed the prioity of the unemployment question over that of the budget deficit which so obsessed the coalition.

The crisis of Fianna Fail

Nevertheless, there are signs that Fianna Fail may face unusual difficulties in maintaining this strategy successfully. The current crisis in Irish politics is above all the crisis of Fianna Fail. A party which has made a fetish of unity is now bitterly and publicly divided. It has failed to win decisively an election, which — on the historical record — ought to have been a walkover. Whatever the outcome of current attempts to despose Haughey — there is little possibility of Fianna Fail overcoming its divisions in the near future. Fine Gael, on the other hand, traditionally the subordinate bourgeois party retains a position of electoral strength well above their natural level and also possess the asset of a widely popular 'liberal' leader in Garret FitzGerald. For the traditionally weak Labour Party matters are very much more problematical — but their retention of fifteen seats was in the short term a reasonable performance. It is Fianna Fail therefore who face the most pressing problems. What are the reasons then for the unprecendented political hesitancy at leadership level? How is it possible to explain the party's recent stuttering — by its own standards — electoral performance? To answer these questions, it is necessary to look at the different ways in which Fianna Fail has maintained its hegemony in Irish politics.

There is no doubt that Fianna Fail has been the dominant political force in modern Ireland. It achieved electoral success in the thirties by its policies of nationalism, agrarian radicalism and support for protective tariffs to make possible an Irish-directed industrialisationn drive.

It is clear then that while Fianna Fail's greater nationalism played a major role in determining the form of cleavage in Irish politics, other factors were also of some importance. As Erhard Rumpf has shown there were important social and regional differences visible in the catchment areas of the two main parties. Cumann na nGaedhael (later Fine Gael), who governed the country from 1922 to 1932, had the support of the more prosperous elements — the larger farmers, the higher bourgeoisie and the larger manufacturers. Fianna Fail's support came mainly from the smaller (and poorer) farmers, the small shopkeepers, the urban and rural petty-bourgeoisie and even, in some measure, the urban working class. Geographically, the split showed a clear east-west gradient; Cumann na nGaedhael was strongest in the more prosperous regions of the east and south-east, while Fianna Fail had most support in the poorer areas of the west and south-west.

In the thirties, Fianna Fail initially made a reasonably serious effort to implement its programme. Protection assisted a considerable expansion of a largely Irish-directed industrialisation drive. It proved more difficult to maintain the impetus of agrarian radicalism, however, and Fianna Fail's support in the more depressed western rural regions began to fall off as early as 1938. Some of their traditional opponents, now organised in Fine Gael, had however tarnished their respectable image by a flirtation with fascism. As late as 1938 Fianna Fail was beginning to look like the 'respectable' party of government. The second world war accelerated this process. Ireland's neutrality was electorally popular. De Valera, in particular, was widely believed to have conducted this policy with skill and subtlety. The other parties tailed after him on this question and he gained access to even wider bases of support. By the 1943 general

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Communist Party Welsh Committee/
Y Blaid Gomiwnyddol Pwyllgor Cymreig
Communist Party Day Schools

IN THE SERVICE OF SOCIALISM IN WALES

The Communist Party announces Sequences of Open, Public Day Schools to which all interested individuals, organisations, trade unions and political parties are invited.

The programmes are a sequel to Communist University of Wales One and a preparation for Communist University of Wales Two.

Each Sequence will feature one common lecture on a general theme which will be delivered at every School. Each School will feature additional speakers and discussions on a particular problem.

SEQUENCE ONE

Common Lecture:
Gwyn A. Williams on **Welsh workers and British capitalism.**
From June, this lecture could be delivered in the Welsh language, with an English version in photocopied typescript available, if any group were interested.

March. DEESIDE
27 March, the Clwyd Hotel, Shotton, with Manny Cohen, on **North-East Wales, its future and its role within Wales.**

April. CARDIFF
24 April, Law Building, Cathays Park, with Bob Rowthorn, on **The Multi-Nationals and Wales.**

May. GWYNEDD
Date, place and additional speakers to be announced, on **Gwynedd, its future and its role within Wales.**

June. SWANSEA
The South Wales Miners' Library, date to be announced, with Hywel Francis and Kim Howells, on **Trade unions in Wales, the Wales TUC and the struggle for Socialism.**

July. PONTYPOOL
Date, place and additional speakers to be announced, on the **Gwent Alliance against Unemployment and the United Front in the 80s.**

September. MERTHYR
Date, place and additional speakers to be announced, on the **Industrial Valleys of South Wales, their future and their role within Wales.**

October. ABERYSTWYTH
There will be a major Communist Party School on **Socialism and the Welsh Nation, with Raymond Williams, Gwyn Williams and other speakers.**

Sequence Two to follow. Every School will be advertised individually. For information and preliminary booking, please contact the CP at 4 Tudor St, Cardiff CF1 8RF (0222-25111) or, for south Wales, Williams, 66 De Burgh St., Riverside, Cardiff CF1 8LD (0222-374131) and, for north Wales, Cohen, 31 St. David's Road, Abergele (0745-825192) or Davies, 3 Central Drive, Shotton (0244-814330).

Y DDRAIG GOCH DAN Y FANER GOCH

WORLD MARXIST REVIEW

March issue includes

The Way to Peace and Stability in Southeast Asia
Nguyen Duy Trinh

Features of the Revolutionary Party
Arsene Ratsifehera

Annals of the Struggle
Ari dos Santos

Bypassing Capitalism
Puntsagdashiyn Luvsandorge

Single issue 50p Subscription (1 year) £7 for 12 issues
Apply to WMR, Central Books,
14 The Leathermarket, London SE1 3ER.

SAUS PAPERS

Working Paper Number 20
THE LOCAL STATE:
Theory and Practice

Martin Boddy and Colin Fudge (eds)
£3.00 (+50p p&p)

'As Keith Bassett points out in *The Local State*, Labour would also do well to look back at the theories developed in the Labour Party in the thirties, by figures as prominent as Clement Attlee, about the role of local government in transforming this society into a socialist society . . . *The Local State* provides a useful starting point for anyone more interested in theories of change in local authorities'

Carl James, *Tribune*

The Working Paper is available directly from the Publishers. For this Paper, or further information and a complete list of SAUS Papers, please contact The Publications Assistant, School for Advanced Urban Studies, Rodney Lodge, Grange Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 4EA.

All cheques payable to the 'University of Bristol'

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

election, Fianna Fail had lost a good deal of its original distinctive regional and social character and it was now, in the opinion of many political scientists, a 'catchall party'.

Modernisation strategy

The change in the party's electoral sociology implied a change in political tactics. In particular, the party's radical agrarian policy, which had been so important in 1932, was gradually whittled away by 'modernisers' within the cabinet. As late as 1942, official documents speak of the need for further large scale schemes of land redistribution to benefit small farmers and landless men. (They even praise the Nazis for their agrarian romanticism!). But by 1946 Fianna Fail ministers openly proclaimed that there were too many people on the land and poured scorn on much of the work of land redistribution. The Marxist writer Ralph Fox, in a book on Connolly published in that year, drew attention in his conclusion to this new development in the progress of the Irish revolution. He was sharply and piously castigated in the Dublin press, but Fianna Fail's steady abandonment of even vestigial agrarian radicalism was to prove Fox's critics wrong.

In the fifties, as de Valera increasingly submitted to poor health and blindness, Sean Lemass emerged, not without a struggle, as the dominant figure in Fianna Fail, eventually becoming leader from 1959-66. Lemass cast himself in the role of moderniser, though of the prudent rather than the iconoclastic variety. Under his direction, the basis of Fianna Fail hegemony was further revised and refined. With agrarian radicalism jettisoned, industrialisation strategy remained in force as the principal feature of Fianna Fail radicalism. As early as 1945, Lemass was privately convinced that protection had outlived its usefulness and was merely serving to reinforce inefficiency and profiteering on the part of the domestic bourgeoisie. Even more controversially, because it challenged a fundamental tenet of the Irish revolution, of his own party and indeed his own political past, Lemass began to view the possible penetration of foreign capital in a more sympathetic light. Simultaneously, Lemass, alone it would appear in the Fianna Fail leadership, was impressed by writers such as Beveridge, Keynes and Kaldor — the architects of moves in Britain towards planning and the welfare state. He spoke freely of the need for a 'new' democratic partnership with the Irish trade unions.

> The real surprise was the good showing of a group of left candidates

The Lemass strategy of modernisation faced very definite restraints. The domestic bourgeoisie feared the consequences of the loss of protection and the introduction of foreign capital. Many members of his own party adopted an 'anti-statist' rhetoric rooted in catholic social theory. Even the postwar British state was perceived as incipiently totalitarian. As a result, Lemass's strategy was circuitous and at times his pronouncements were cryptic, even contradictory. However, the stagnation and then the near collapse of the Irish economy in the fifties was to give Lemass his opportunity. With emigration running at 40,000 a year — higher than the last decades of British rule — the whole basis of Irish independence was called into question. It became possible to implement successfully hitherto unacceptable measures of economic policy.

The neglected clue

Nevertheless, the fifties crisis remains the neglected clue to much current Irish politics. Economically Lemass's 'crude' or 'simple' Keynesianism — as one of his principal economic advisers, the legendary T K Whitaker, termed it — had one major defect: its tendency to generate sharp budget deficit. This was visible even before the oil crisis and the onset of a harsher international economic climate. More profoundly, in this epoch, the final remnants of much traditional Irish nationalist social and economic ideology were dropped. Desmond Fennell, a widely respected nationalist commentator, sourly acknowledges this when he talks of the state being re-legitimised in purely material, ie, non-spiritual, economic terms. The emotional excitement generated by the northern troubles since the late sixties, has tended to obscure the fact that the nationalist tradition itself faces crisis.

Haughey's fumbling leadership has not been, as so many believe, merely a question of personal inadequancy. It reflects the difficulties and ambiguities of the Lemass legacy. (Lemass was appropriately Haughey's father-in-law.) When he achieved leadership of Fianna Fail in 1980, his first television broadcast was given over to a homily based on 'hairshirt' monetarist economics. He combined this with 'republicanism', that is to say, demagogic exploitation of the possibilities of the Anglo-Irish talks. When this strategy failed to achieve a genuine popular resonance, Haughey opportunistically rediscovered the Lemass 'crude Keynesian' message with a vengeance. The ambiguous result of the 1982 general election demonstrates that he has clearly not succeeded in convincing the electorate that he can repeat Lemass's successes.

Conclusion

The vacillations in Haughey's economic policies are likely to continue. Similarly, his uncomprehending, even bovine, reaction to Fitzgerald's generous acknowledgement of the oppressively Catholic features of the Irish state may also serve to corrode further Fianna Fail's progressive image. This will give the new left deputies plenty of scope. There is a further important development. For the first time in its history, the Irish Labour Party finds itself outflanked on its left by a coherent parliamentary group in the Dail. (This is also true in the trade union movement, where the SFWP has a solid base.) For the Labour Party, which is deeply divided between Left and Right, this raises questions of great delicacy. The logistics of the hung Dail will ensure a much greater public prominence to socialist arguments — and arguments between socialists — than has been usual in Irish life. If this opportunity is not to be wasted, these debates will have to be conducted with great tact and skill. □

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Channel Five

URBAN COWBOYS

Mary Harron

In America, it took thirty years for country music to acquire an acceptable commercial image. It was only in the late seventies that major radio stations began switching to country, and the focus switched from 'rednecks' to 'urban cowboys' — from truck drivers to lawyers in cowboy boots. Over here it is still a despised minority interest, still occupying the same strongholds in the North and in Ireland. Every Easter, the fans make the annual pilgrimage to the International Festival of Country Music at Wembley, patiently accepting the over-priced tickets, atrocious sound system, and a four day diet of ersatz Southern friend chicken.

The promoter of the festival, Mervyn Conn, presents himself as a champion of home-grown talent. This allows him to pad the bill with mediocre English and Irish country acts (saving on both salaries and air fares) while the audience waits six hours for the American headliners to appear.

The stars are what have kept the festival going, but this year they are conspicuously absent. Johnny Cash and Tammy Wynette have been replaced by Kris Kristofferson and a host of second division performers like Marty Robbins. There are none of the great ladies of country, and the only legends are Jerry Lee Lewis and Roy Orbison, who both come from rock and roll. Now that country music has been adopted into the American mainstream the stars can command higher prices and better conditions, and this is a sign of how Nashville itself has changed.

Country music made its first national breakthrough with Hank Williams in the fifties, but it was still music for hicks. It was naive, vulgar, sentimental and its performers had no concept of 'good taste'. It was 'music by poor people for poor people', just like soul, and went in for the same kind of tinselly display. Sequinned cowboy suits, white Cadillacs, party gowns and fantastic wigs — the style of performers who came up from nothing and wanted to show what they had.

In the sixties, when college students were discovering the blues and every other type of ethnic American music was being reverently examined, country was despised for different reasons. The South meant racism, hawks on Vietnam, the Klan and the rednecks who shot the heroes in *Easy Rider*.

Country music is the only white, working class music America has, and the Left has never come to terms with a grass roots music that is deeply, resentfully conservative. Merle Haggard offers the perfect illustration. The son of poor Okies who moved to Texas during the depression, he was born in a boxcar that his father had converted into the family home: he had a background out of a Woody Guthrie song, and unlike Guthrie, was not a drifter by choice. Haggard is one of the very few musical outlaws who has actually spent time in jail, and he was in the prison audience the day Johnny Cash played San Quentin.

It was the perfect material for a romantic legend. In the sixties, the folk audience discovered songs like *I'm A Lonesome Fugitive* and *From Now On All My Friends Are Going To Be Strangers* and began to celebrate Haggard as one of Guthrie's heirs. Then he released *Okie From Muskogee*. A song written in twenty minutes in a jokey spirit in the back of a tour bus, it became an anthem for blue-collar resentment against draft-dodgers, beatniks, hippies and all the weird changes taking place in the USA. The song won the top country music awards that year, made Haggard a major star, and lost him his student following. It wasn't till the memory of Vietnam had faded that Haggard was accepted outside of country music as a modern folk hero.

Haggard is not a professional patriot; he has never voted and avoids any political involvement. But he was the voice of Middle America, working class bitterness during the Vietnam era, of men who hated the way God and country had come under attack, but felt equally betrayed by the government. Haggard also reveals the mean-spiritedness of country music. In *I'm A White Boy* he sneers 'I don't live in no ghetto' — blacks become the scapegoat for the poor Southerner's bad

Merle Haggard

Waylon Jennings

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

times. But mixed with this is the spirit of *A Working Man Can't Get Nowhere Today* and *Big Country*, that the old values of hard work, duty and patriotism just don't pay off:

I'm tired of this dirty old city
And tired of too much work and never enough play
And I'm tired of this dirty old sidewalk
Think I'll walk off my steady job today.

Turn me loose, set me free, somewhere in the middle of Montana
Give me all I've got coming to me
And keep your retirement and your so-called social security
Big city turn me loose and set me free.

There are two ways of looking at country music. You can judge it on its attitudes, or for how clearly it reflects how its audience thinks and feels. As long as it was a closed market, with a clearly marked audience, it had to be responsive to its fans in a way that the mainstream wasn't. It gave women, in particular, a voice. Loretta Lynn said 'I know what it's like to be pregnant and nervous and poor'. Neither she nor Tammy Wynette nor Dolly Parton conform to feminist guidelines. Their songs were autobiographies: they made their lives public and gave a woman's experience a value and a place in popular music, firmly placing themselves as an alternative to the male point of view.

In the mid-seventies it was the 'outlaws' — Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson — who, with their long hair, denims, drug references and liberal image, brought country to a young, hip audience. They loosened up country, but at the same time introduced a soft-focus Hollywood romanticism, worthy of The Eagles or *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. In this world, outlaws are cuddly, bullets don't hurt, and women are infinitely tolerant, easy lays:

'She's a good-hearted woman in love with a good timin' man
She loves him in spite of his ways that she don't understand.
He likes the bright lights and night and good timin' friends
And when the party's all over she'll welcome him back home again.'

Nashville saw the market opening, and cleaned up its act. The advantage was that black performers were allowed (grudgingly) onto the Grand Ole Opry stage; the disadvantage was that in order to move upmarket it became tastefully, comfortably unreal. With Kenny Rogers, it moved into easy listening. As country stars were accepted on television they began packaging their own past: Loretta Lynn appears with George Burns, smiling bewilderedly as she is led through a rehearsed, Daisy Mae routine.

Norman Mailer once said that America 'murders its writers and then lays wreathes upon their graves'. But America has gentler ways of destroying its culture: in this case by offering four weeks in Las Vegas and a spot on the Johnny Carson show. Nashville still pays service to the country audience while the record companies set their eyes on a bigger and better market. Meanwhile the fans will turn up at Wembley with their six-guns and cowboy hats, ready to pay homage and wondering where the stars have gone. □

RECLAIMING FASHION

Caroline Holder

Clothing plays the same prominent part in our cultural life as it has throughout history. We all wear clothes, yet as a subject worthy of serious discussion, fashion remains a point of contention between feminists and socialists.

For those who hold it in contempt, fashion retains many of its traditional associations as a principally female preoccupation; the changing nature of clothes is dismissed as something arbitrary and meaningless. This inherited attitude towards clothes is reinforced by men who consider themselves to live in a world apart from such trivial considerations as what they wear. Their fear of clothes is concealed behind a multitude of claims: that they don't care about the way they look; that they aren't subject to the dictates of fashion and thereby in some way they 'transcend' it. Because of the pleasure factor that is normally associated with clothes, to make an effort about them, to men, would seem a contradiction.

Women know otherwise. Against and through a barrage of pressures, social and personal, feminists have had to come face to face with what to do with the images the fashion industry has contrived for women to 'choose' from. An earlier solution to the enormous importance attached to the way we looked was a rejection of the problem altogether: to deny the pleasurable aspects of clothing and detach ourselves from the way we looked.

A different and more defiant approach is now being found. Against the old dictum of dressing to please men, women are actively reclaiming the pleasure for themselves. Speaking up through what you wear can be a powerful vehicle of expression. Fashion is just one reflection of society, and the rules about what women can and cannot wear are continually being challenged. That flat shoes have become fashionable is a wonderful thing (let alone a joy to wear). At last, clothes that are relevant can be functional and fun to wear. Dilemmas such as long hair versus short hair, dyed versus natural, trousers versus dresses, are fading into the past. And so, irreversible steps are made towards ridding the meaning that not only men, but also women, have attached for example, to the wearing of skirts. In changing the context, one changes its associations.

Ambivalence in dress is still however a necessity for many women. The power to be defiant has to coexist with an ability (mental and physical) to cope with harassment on the streets. To dissemble, to practice invisibility until it becomes so ingrained on one's nature that it's hard to locate, is a source of much resentment.

Back in 1976, punk freed men to care about the way they looked; to play around and experiment in traditionally female areas. For women it means that they could look aggressive and hostile and feel good. The style of punk broke all previous boundaries of what constituted good taste in dress. But once the strength of the movement diminished, the clothes in themselves became no more than fashionable — and soon to be out of date — clothing. Punk was originally about confrontation, but all strong group identities can quickly turn into a barricade against the world: an identity which is too protective, turns in upon itself and remains static. Women, facing the ongoing and often contradictory process of reclaiming the right to pleasure in clothes, while defying stereotypes, needed new identities.

An interesting comparison can be made between the response by the women's fashion industry to ideas originating from the street, and the mainstream of the men's fashion industry. Here there has been no reflection of these dramatic changes. This speaks sadly not only for the designers and mass

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

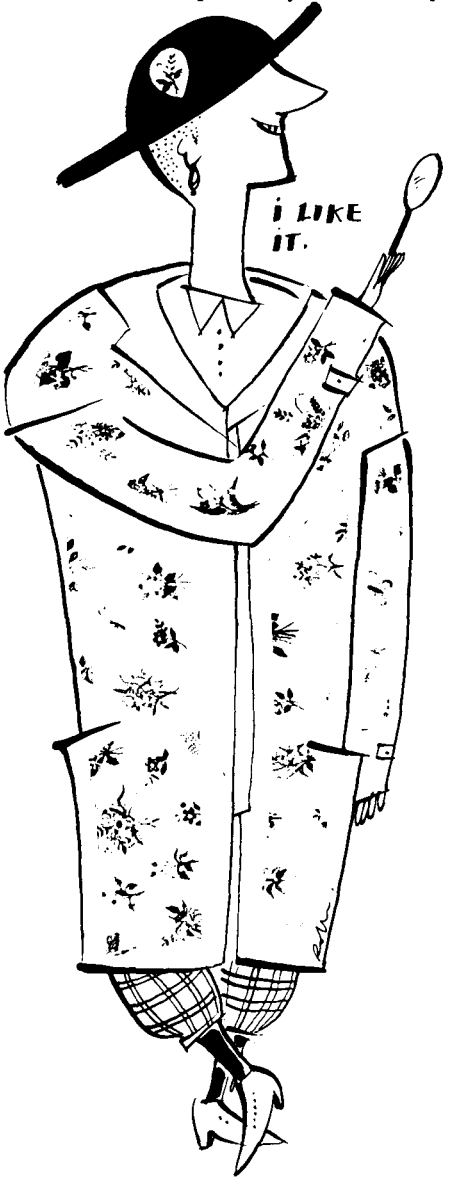
Channel Five

producers within the male market, but also for the majority of men who showed no interest in changing their own notions of what they would and wouldn't wear. As long as the men who demonstrate that they care about the way they look remain cult figures, then industry will never have to change. It will only react when men begin to ask a great deal more in the choice of clothes that are made available to them. The smaller the social grouping, the more the market can afford to ignore you.

The man who is afraid of clothes demonstrates a passivity, and with this, an unwillingness to change. So much so that one would imagine he has something to lose if he did. Dismissing thought about clothes as a feminine and effiminate preoccupation is to relegate dress to the same status as housework. Men rely in this way on a very ancient *status quo:* that women provide the decorative features in life, much in the same way as they are depended upon to do the emotional work or to take responsiblity for contraception. It is undeniable that change involves being uncomfortable, making mistakes, sticking your neck out and even (gasp) being laughed at. More than that, it requires thought, awareness and effort.

The designers' dictatorship of fashion trends appears to have been broken. It is now apparent that ideas originating from the street increasingly influence the styles that will enter into mass production. From a few designers responding to, and to a certain extent being able to anticipate changing needs, the process by which clothes arrive on the market has been altered. The styles from which we can choose offer a truer reflection of what women 'are'. The fashion industry realises that the concept of producing a 'new look' twice a year is both obsolete and impossible to sustain. Even now, some designers are claiming not to work in the field of fashion at all, and in time this may become reality.

Now that social pressure is less of a factor in the buying of clothes, we are all freer to take the initiative from love. Women have found new reasons for loving clothes, and a new confidence in the clothes they choose. How long will it take for men to take up a similar responsibility for themselves? □



Christine Roche

THE STUFF THAT DREAMS ARE MADE OF

Kevin Gough-Yates

The private detective story is a modern phenomenon, born on the pages of pulp magazines in the aftermath of the first world war, during prohibition and economic depression. Whilst its roots can be traced back to the autobiographical fictions of Eugène Francois Vidocq, the world's first private detective, and Alan Pinkerton, the founder of America's first detective agency, it really begins with the writings of Dashiell Hammett in *Black Mask* who had himself been a Pinkerton agent.

The private detective in fiction is an ambiguous figure. William Ruehlman describes him as the saint with a gun, a demon so convinced of his mission that he dispenses justice himself rather than allow the legal system to take its generally ineffective course. The most famous private detective, Sam Spade, is described in the first page of *The Maltese Falcon* as a 'blonde Satan'. The peeping or looking that the detective does reflects his own secretiveness which is sometimes a device for disguising his confusion, and sometimes reveals his own anxieties about being himself watched or followed. He investigates but himself feels investigated. A gun will come 'into focus like an eye' or a torch will watch the detective like a 'yellow suspicious eye'.

He rarely kills, preferring to set the scene so that others carry out the work for him. Having frightened a criminal into divulging information, he may spread the word and let the criminal's friends take care of him. The theme of the detective dispensing his own punishment is taken to its limits by Mickey Spillane through his detective, Mike Hammer. *I, the Jury* brings together, even in its title, the view that the private detective is justified in taking the law into his own hands when his conviction is firm enough. He is jury, judge and executioner.

The novels are sometimes difficult or impossible to follow. There is a famous story about the making of *The Big Sleep* where no one on the film could work out who killed the Sternwoods' chauffeur. Raymond Chandler, when asked, not only failed to provide an answer but indicated that the question

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had not previously occurred to him. In fact, the private detective himself, who is generally the teller of the tale, also finds the plot unfathomable. The first film version of *Farewell My Lovely* starring Dick Powell as Philip Marlowe, begins with the bright glare of a lamp on his blindfolded face in a police station. As he narrates his story, it becomes clear that he remains as confused as the opening sequence suggests.

The development of these stories is invariably the same. The detective is called in to find a jade necklace, a child who has run away, or to retrieve some stag movies. In themselves, these projects are not central to his quest but they are expressions of power and wealth and the ways in which they can be exploited. *The Maltese Falcon* is exactly that, an object that will provide untold wealth and happiness. People will bribe, blackmail, murder or try to buy it. The sums they offer are nominal considering it is said to be priceless, but, in the end, it turns out to be a fake. It is no more genuine than the characters in the novel who live lives of deception. When, in the film, Sam Spade describes it as 'the stuff that dreams are made of' he knows that it represents a wish that cannot be satisfied. In *Farewell My Lovely*, the jade necklace that Marlowe is called in to help recover, turns out not to have been stolen at all and he finds himself in a web of intrigue in which an ex-prostitute has risen in society through marriage and wants to eliminate traces of her past. Such people live, however, in a world in which the criminals rule, in which the politicians and police themselves are in their pockets. There is no way in which the past can be washed away; they are permanently in debt to those who raised them to their present positions.

This is a prevailing theme in the novels of Ross Macdonald, in which Lew Archer invariably finds himself drawn into an emotional tangle in which the sins of the parents return to them, often via the children. In *The Drowning Pool*, the daughter is driven by the curse of her illegitimacy to cause her mother's death. As with *The Big Sleep*, the story takes place within a framework of great and established wealth; the parents, now respectable, have offspring whom they cannot control.

The ways in which crime and politics in American society interrelate in these works is more pronounced in the novels of Dashiell Hammett and Andrew Bergman and films like Roman Polanski's *Chinatown*. The operative of Hammett's *Red Harvest* describes his arrival in a totally corrupt town presumably typical of America in the twenties. There is only one way to clean up

Personville (or Poisonville) and that is to destroy the social and political fabric in which the police, the politicians, the union bosses, the criminals are all in collusion. Hammett's private eye, the Continental Op, stirs things up and sets group against group until they kill each other. The detective reaps his harvest with a bloodbath and cleans out the town. There is, however, no long term hope for it and no indication that, revitalised, it will not re-establish itself as it was previously.

The corruption that Hammett describes in *Red Harvest* is a central thread that runs through the novels and films. In Andrew Bergman's *The Big Kiss-Off of 1944*, written thirty-seven years later, Jack Le Vine is asked to retrieve the prints and negatives of some pornographic films in which a minor actress has appeared. She is being blackmailed by a gang of psychopathic military figures, paranoid at the possible defeat of Franklin Roosevelt by Governor Dewey in the forthcoming presidential election. They plan to stop Dewey's campaign by cutting off his main supply of campaign funds which happens to be the father of the actress, for how could an anti-corruption candidate accept money from such a source? In *Hollywood and Le Vine*, there is a similar scenario in which the investigator is attempting to discover why a studio is trying to reduce the salary of one of its most successful screenwriters. Le Vine finds himself drawn into secret confidence in a dirty disused building with Congressman Nixon (a member of the House Committee on Un-American Activities) who calls upon Le Vine's patriotism to help him dig out enemy agents in Hollywood. Le Vine, like other private eyes before him, sees his role as correcting injustice and not contributing to the vested interests of particular groups.

The criminals of these novels have a utopian vision. They want to capture the dream in the present and eliminate all threats to it. When the monstrous Noah Cross introduces himself to the police in the film *Chinatown*, he does not forget to mention his wealth. He not only owns the city's water supply, 'he owns the police'. When asked the motive for his attempts to illegally acquire land around the city, he says it is to buy 'the future'. He is a reincarnation of the evil figure of Caspar Gutman in *The Maltese Falcon.*

The detective stands outside the law and is suspiciously incorruptible. He is a constant and irritating reminder to the police that

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Channel Five

they either will not or cannot carry out their duties properly, either because police bureaucracy prevents it or because they are, themselves, complicit in the conspiratorial structure of society. This division in attitude is generally shown by splitting it between two policemen, one ambitious and corrupt, the other solid and reliable but unsuccessful at all levels.

It is reasonable to question the objectivity of the detective himself in these, generally, first person stories. When Marlowe describes the way in which women fall into his arms there is always the sense of an unjustified boast. There is invariably the possibility that he is hiding something from the reader, afraid lest the truth about himself will emerge. Hence, in a film like *Night Moves* where Gene Hackman as the detective turns his own gaze inwards on his own marriage, he finds the revelations shocking and unpleasant. He has hidden himself behind his role as private investigator. He often looks and doesn't hear and hears whilst failing to see. The attempt to resolve the problem of his marriage runs parallel to an increasing incapacity to be a good detective and the film ends with him wounded in a motor launch going round in circles, less certain, more confused than when the investigations began.

Before Dashiell Hammett, crime in fiction took place in what Raymond Chandler called a 'Venetian vase', or the English country home with its set characters. After Hammett, crime was given back to those who actually committed it. The private eye always fights a losing battle; he solves a crime but he cannot resolve problems fundamental to American society. Like the monster in horror films, the villain is indestructible. The private eye's posture as a conscious arbiter of morality makes him into a confessor, absorbing the guilt of society and its members and consequently guilty himself. □

SNOOKER

Sheila Capstick

The 1982 World Snooker Championship will soon be taking up a considerable amount of our television viewing time. With household names like Steve Davis, Alex Higgins, Ray Reardon and Terry Griffiths, snooker has now become one of the major TV sports.

For a long time, though, snooker has been popular among men and, in the 4,000 or so working men's clubs, the snooker table has always been a star attraction. It is a precision instrument often maintained as part of an after-sales service. It has to be kept level, the cloth cleaned and ironed regularly and the cushions checked for their spring or bounce. The tables are expensive — the cost running into thousands of pounds — but most clubs have at least one. The club championships, inter-club championships, leagues and trophies galore make this a must.

Snooker can be captivating for players and spectators alike and more so since its recent television exposure. The game is enjoyed by men and women of all ages but in the main, the players are men. There is one very obvious reason for this. Very few working mens clubs allow women to play on the snooker tables and some do not permit women in the snooker room at all. On certain nights when the main matches are scheduled, women may be barred from the club completely and, where there is no separate snooker room there may be a line drawn on the floor — beyond which women cannot cross. So the first time you turn on your TV set to watch the World Snooker Championships and see Steve Davis playing a woman, it will be only as a result of tremendous changes in male attitudes to women and not because one exceptional woman has made it in the world of snooker. □

PLUTO PRESS NEW

THE SUMMER BEFORE THE FROST: SOLIDARITY IN POLAND
JEAN-YVES POTEL

An eyewitness account of the birth, growth and functioning of Solidarity in the town and countryside. Plus major considerations on the influence of the church, the Party, political oppositions, nationalism and the military.
An introduction written after the declaration of martial law, analyses its causes and consequences.
£3.95 paperback

POLAND: THE STATE OF THE REPUBLIC
Two reports by the Experience and Future Discussion Group (DiP) Warsaw.
£4.95 paperback

PLUTO PRESS LTD. UNIT 10, SPENCER COURT, 7 CHALCOT RD, LONDON NW1 8LH

Women's writings, lyrics and poetry wanted for an anthology on nuclear holocaust collected by a group of politically active women attempting to use words to inspire change and resistance.

Send material to R Azen, Flat 3, 29 Honeywell Road London SW11.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Discussion

Paisley and Protestant Politics

Geoff Bell

For the last ten years the 'Irish problem' for the British Left has been the Protestant working class. That these workers have been perceived as being sectarian, divisive and politically and socially reactionary has contributed, at least in part, to the marginalisation of the Irish conflict in the day-to-day activity and theoretical work of much of the Left in this country. It is not difficult to see why: if the majority of the working class in Northern Ireland are as politically backward as Protestant Loyalists appear to be, then what chance for progress is there? Lately, such a question has become all the more relevant with the rise of Paisleyism which, as Henry Patterson noted in January's *Marxism Today,* now has 'substantial working class support'.

An attempt to come to grips with the phenomenon of the Protestant working class is therefore long overdue. In that respect Henry Patterson's article is welcome, as indeed is the work he and others of his 'school' have undertaken[1].

A major revision

It is all the more stimulating that Henry Patterson argues for a major revision in the manner in which Marxists have analysed what he terms, 'Protestant politics', the traditional view being best summed up in the description Lenin applied to the Ulster Loyalists in 1914 as being counter-revolutionary, 'Black-Hundred gangs'[2]. Or, as James Connolly, with his first-hand experience of a union organiser in Belfast put it, 'the Orange working class are slaves in spirit because they have been reared up among a people whose conditions of servitude were more slavish than their own'[3]

Henry Patterson challenges such perceptions. In itself, there is nothing wrong with that; reality did not end in Lenin's or Connolly's time. But what is breathtaking about Henry Patterson's re-interpretation is that it ends up, with fists raised in the opposite corner to the traditional Marxist view. To over-simplify, Henry Patterson sides with the Loyalists.

This is apparent in his conclusion to his article in *Marxism Today.* He calls for an ending of the 'constitutional uncertainty' in Northern Ireland by, from Britain, 'a clear commitment to devolve government'. This, he argues, would cut the ground from under Paisley, and in one sense it could. For, as this is what Paisley is asking for, it would deny him, at least momentarily, a cause. But although Henry Patterson also argues for 'rigorous safeguards for minorities', there is no disguising that he is calling for a stopping of Paisley by appeasement. Incidentally, the plea for minority safeguards is in idealistic contrast to the concreteness of the rest of Henry Patterson's analysis. Just how would such safeguards be enforced? The experience in Northern Ireland and other capitalist states of legislating for civil rights has not proved encouraging.

Saying that Henry Patterson argues for appeasement of Paisley is not to suggest that he has even a trace of sympathy for Protestant sectarianism. His suggestions are made with the best of motives: that by assuring the Protestant working class of their constitutional position and by giving them the right to rule Northern Ireland they would then move on to more distinctively class politics. This hypothesis is sustained by an historical and contemporary analysis of Protestant politics which sees the Protestant masses as reacting to challenges to them, and that the best way to stop the reaction is to cease to challenge. And it is in this view, that the main difficulties with Henry Patterson's argument lie.

The differences between North and South

The first major suggestion that Henry makes is that there was an economic and social justification for the Protestants' reaction to the movement in Ireland during the 19th and early 20th centuries for self-determination: a reaction which ended with partition. For Henry, 'the clear divergence of economic and social structures North and South is quite sufficient to account for the existence of two states'. There is reference to, at the end of the 19th century, the ' "progressive" industrial Ulster and "backward", "stagnant" peasant southern Ireland.' And, for Henry, there were contrasting political/sociological structures, illustrated by Orangeism on the one hand and, on the other, 'sectarian aspects of Irish nationalism', in particular the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

Both these arguments have a questionable validity. The first, which seeks to exlain partition by the separate economic development of the two areas, is one that has been used by both those who attack or justify partition. The facts are not so persuasive. It is true that by the end of the 19th century Belfast was an Irish outpost of industrial Britain, but within the nine county province of Ulster as a whole there was not such an economic or social divergence with the rest of Ireland. For example as late as 1906 emigration from Ulster — a sure sign of economic deprivation — was in line with the Irish national average, and indeed in one of the most industrialised counties, Antrim, it was higher than the national average.[4]. Similarly, in some aspects of social life, even in Belfast, 'progressiveness' was difficult to detect. A 1906 report from the commissioners for national education in Ireland noted that Belfast was 'the most backward in the British Isles in the matter of schools. I venture to say that the poorest counties in Ireland are better off in this respect.'

Even after partition, the new remodelled six county 'Ulster' was not a thriving centre of commerce. In 1926 agriculture still employed the largest number of male workers[5].

Nationalist sectarianism

If the economic differences between North and South were not so comprehensive as to explain partition, what of Henry Patterson's second argument, that the establishment of the Northern Ireland state was a defence

[1] For instance, Bew, Gibbon and Patterson, *The State in Northern Ireland,* Manchester 1979; Henry Patterson, *Class Conflict and Sectarianism,* Belfast 1980. In contrast to, Michael Farrell, *Northern Ireland, The Orange State,* London 1976; Geoffrey Bell, *The Protestants of Ulster,* London 1976.

[2] *Lenin on Ireland,* Dublin, 1970, p14.

[3] James Connolly, *Selected Writings,* London 1973, p215.

[4] For breakdown of figures see *Thoms Directory* 1908, Dublin, p127.

[5] *Ulster Year Book,* 1926.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

against Catholic nationalist sectarianism? The one example, prior to partition, which is given is the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH). But the AOH could hardly be interpreted as representing the threat of southern nationalism, for it was largely confined to Belfast. More generally, while it is the case that the Irish national movement of the 19th and early 20th centuries did have traces of the promotion of the interests of Catholicism in its make-up, this is hardly surprising given the historic discrimination Catholics suffered in Ireland.

Moreover, Catholic sectarianism was a minute factor in Irish nationalism in comparison with the influence its Orange counterpart has had on Unionism. For all Henry Patterson's depreciation of the power of the Orange Order, it was under its auspices that the Unionist Party was formed in the late 19th century, and even today the Order has a guaranteed number of seats on the Official Unionists' ruling council. Until the late 1970s it was, in practice, obligatory for any Unionist Party election candidate to be a member of the Orange Order. Neither the AOH, the Legion of Mary or any other Catholic institution had or has such power. Henry Patterson is correct to point out that since partition the southern state has, on occasions, in its social policy over-reflected the Catholicism of the large majority of its inhabitants, but it is unlikely that such a development would have occurred had the million Protestant joined the new state in 1921. They would have been too large a constituency to offend.

Even if, for the sake of argument, Henry Patterson is correct when he says that socially and culturally, northern Protestants see the South as an 'alien society' in terms of social values Unionists are as far removed from Great Britain as from the South. As the then powerful Ulster Vanguard Party put it in 1972, 'Recent experience suggests that a Westminster administration of Ulster affairs would be representative of the social mores of the larger island and insensitive towards the rather old fashioned Ulster which progressives despise'[6].

The British interest

It is this issue of Britain's relationship with the Northern Ireland state where Henry Patterson's explanation for Loyalist nastiness as a reaction to external pressure becomes the most dangerous. He argues that both before and after partition the British ruling class had no 'substantial interest' in staying in the north of Ireland. The contention is that before partition 'the predominant position in the British ruling class was to treat the Unionists as expendable'. This is just not the case. The 'predominant position' in the British ruling class was one that was successful. The view, backed to the hilt by the Tory party and the establishment in the British Army, was that even if it meant defying Westminster, 'Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right', to quote Randolph Churchill.

It is true that British presence in Ireland is not motivated today, or even recently, by simple imperialist plunder. Indeed, the main reason even predates imperialism. It is summed up in the following secret report approved by the British cabinet in 1949: 'It has become a matter of first class strategic importance to this country that the North should continue to form part of His Majesty's dominions. So far as can be seen, it will never be to Great Britain's advantage that Northern Ireland should form part of a territory outside His Majesty's jurisdiction. Indeed it seems unlikely that Great Britain would ever be able to agree to this even if the people of Northern Ireland desired it'[7].

It is fair to assume that in a general sense such a view prevails today. The British ruling class may, in principle, want to be shot of Ireland, but they will only do so if their 'strategic interests', that is their defence interests, are guaranteed. That is why the current talks between the Irish and British governments on new 'institutional' arrangements in Ireland go hand in hand with Britain's desire to see the south of Ireland in NATO. In the meantime, Britain will stick with partition.

It is not that Henry Patterson tends to absolve Britain of any blame for the current Irish conflict. He misplaces the blame. 'The effect of British policy in conjunction with the Provisional campaign has been to generate the conditions for a resurgence of Protestant populism', that is Paisleyism, he complains. Such an explanation is to feed the paranoia of Paisleyism and its protest at the failure to adopt 'firm security measures'. How many more Bloody Sundays, Castlereagh torture chambers or H Blocks must there be before Britain has shown enough 'firmness' to satisfy the Loyalists? How many more Loyalists will have to be trained and armed in the British Army controlled Ulster Defence Regiment before a 'third force' becomes unnecessary?

Essentially, what Henry Patterson is asking for is that Republicans cease their agitation, and Britain allows the Loyalists to run their Ulster as they see fit.

In practical terms it is unreal. The IRA and its predecessors have been fighting too many years for Irish self-determination to cease now. Even the most obdurate of British politicians recognises that it was Loyalist mis-rule in Northern Ireland since 1921 which created the current round of the Irish 'troubles' with sectarianism and repression of political opponents.

Real material differences

More importantly, for socialists, Henry Patterson's diagnosis is a political misjudgement. James Connolly was right. What the Protestant working class is defending is its better 'conditions of servitude'. The real material base for Protestant workers' sectarianism is the privileged position they have enjoyed over their Catholic counterparts. These privileges have been documented by a wealth of statistics which Henry Patterson neglects to mention. They have meant that before and after partition the Protestant working class in Northern Ireland has had relatively more jobs, better jobs and better houses than have Catholic workers[8]. This situation persists. In 1978 the government sponsored Fair Employment Agency reported that there were two and a half times as many Catholics unemployed as there were Protestants[9]. A later report, issued by the same body in 1980, concluded that in the last generation 'Catholics have tended to move down the social scale more commonly than Protestants' and that 'the proportion of Catholics in lower status jobs could increase in the next decade'[10].

That is what the Protestant working class was defending when it attacked the civil rights movement in the late 1960s, just as it is what the Northern Ireland state was set up to defend and reproduce. The Irish national revolution of the late 19th and early 20th century threatened such privilege, and the more progressive wing of that revolution threatened landlordism and capitalism. The revolution was incomplete for a variety of reasons, but one of them was the insistence by the Protestant working class that the 'Loyalists' had the right to veto Irish majority rule, and, ultimately, the unity of the Irish working class.

Given the marginal material benefits the Protestant worker enjoyed and continue to enjoy their behaviour has been understandable. Given as well the classic settler culture of 'progressive' Protestants and 'backward' Irish natives, which has ideologically reinforced such privilege, then on that level too the behaviour of the Protestant working class is understandable. But to understand is not to justify. □

---

[6] Ulster Vanguard, *Ulster a Nation,* Belfast 1972, p10.
[7] Public Record Office, CP(49)4.
[8] See, for instance, Bell, *op cit,* p15-33.
[9] *Irish Times,* 12/1/78.
[10] *Irish Times,* 17/1/80.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Reviews

THE FORWARD MARCH OF LABOUR HALTED?
Eric Hobsbawm and others
Verso in association with *Marxism Today*
1981 Pbk £2.95 *ISBN 0 86091 737 1*

The items in this book which have already appeared in *Marxism Today* include the Marx Memorial Lecture which Eric Hobsbawm delivered at Marx House in March 1978, and which gives the title to the book; nine comments on the lecture and a 'Response' to them by him; and an interview with Tony Benn in July 1980, also conducted by Hobsbawm. In addition, the book includes eight not previously published further comments on the lecture, and Hobsbawm's final 'Observations on the Debate'. It is very useful to have all this brought together here, for the discussion raises many issues of the greatest importance for all socialists.

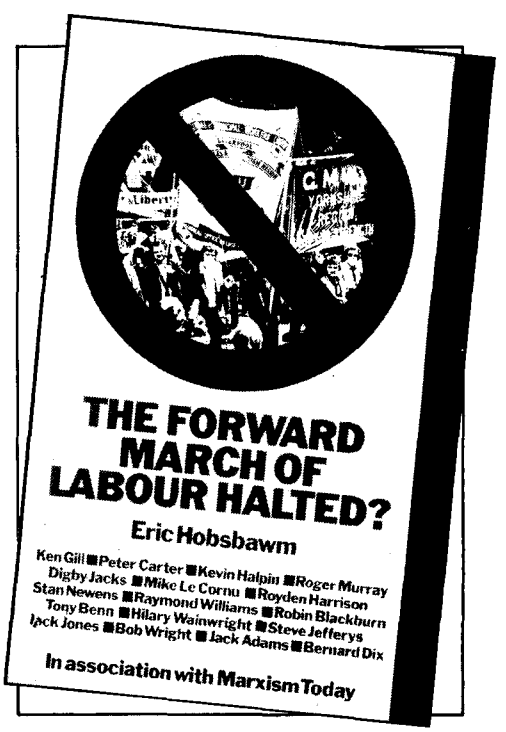
In his lecture, Hobsbawm advanced the view that 'the forward march of labour and the labour movement, which Marx predicted, appears to have come to a halt in this century about twenty-five or thirty years ago' (p1). This view was based on two separate propositions. The first was that there has occurred a growth in the 'sectionalism' of the working class: 'We now see a growing division of workers into sections and groups each pursuing its own economic interest irrespective of the rest' (p14). The second proposition, derived from the decline of the Labour Party's vote since 1951, is that there has occurred a decline in the class consciousness of labour, and in 'the highest degree of class consciousness, namely socialist consciousness' (p16).

Many of the contributors to the discussion take issue, to my mind very effectively, with the view that there has been a growth of 'sectionalism' and 'economism' in the labour movement, and a decline in its sense of solidarity and class consciousness. They point to a measure of rank and file militancy far greater than existed in the thirties and forties, and to the much more directly political character of that militancy; to the power of shop stewards and to the greater solidarity to be found in many trade union struggles; to the growth of trade unionism among women workers and white collar workers; and to many other features in the history of the last twenty-five or thirty years which belie the notion of 'decline' or 'halt'.

None of the contributors who write in this vein engage in the facile 'triumphalism' which used to be common on some parts of the Left. On the contrary, they too point to the many limitations and divisions which affect the labour movement; and what they say would need to be even more strongly emphasised today, given the reflux produced by continued mass unemployment. Nevertheless, Hobsbawm's critics do rightly see advance, in comparison with an earlier epoch, where he sees stagnation and retreat; and he himself handsomely concedes in his 'Response' to the first nine contributions that 'whether sectionalism is stronger in the trade union movement today than in the past, as I suggested, is an historical question on which I may well be wrong' (p69). However, he also insists that 'sectionalism — of a different kind from the past perhaps — exists *today*' (p69, emphasis in text); and this is something which no one would wish to contest. But it is a very different point; and the historical perspective in which today's 'sectionalism' is discussed is of great consequence. For the perspective of decline obscures not only the many positive developments which have occurred in the trade union movement: it also produces a debilitating under-estimation of important developments which have occurred in other areas. One of them, to which Hobsbawm refers in passing, is the greater currency of socialist ideas. Socialism is of course still far too marginal a part of the political culture; but it is a great deal less marginal than it was twenty-five or thirty years ago, not to speak of earlier epochs. Another such development is the liberation of many dedicated socialists from the Stalinist straightjacket in which they were imprisoned in earlier years.

What then of Hobsbawm's second proposition, that relating to the decline in the Labour vote? Here, the record appears much more straight forward. In 1951, the Labour vote was close to 14,000,000, and Labour's share of the poll was 48.8%; in 1979, the corresponding figures were 11,510,000 and 36.9%. As Hobsbawm notes, the biggest drop (one and a half million votes) occurred between 1951 and 1955; and it could therefore be argued that the decline between 1955 and 1979 (less than a million votes) has not, properly speaking, been catastrophic. But it has nevertheless been very marked, not only in votes cast for Labour, but also in the membership of the Labour Party. In short, the Labour Party has failed, over a period of nearly thirty years, to regain the electoral support it had in 1951, and to gain support in that vast part of the working class electorate which votes for anti-socialist and anti-Labour candidates. Here is failure indeed.

Even so, there is no good evidence to suggest that this dissociation from Labour has been accompanied by a greater working class commitment than hitherto to the cause of conservatism. The significance of the gains made by the Conservative Party in 1979 can from this point of view be greatly exaggerated. It is much more likely that working class alienation from Labour also means


THE FORWARD MARCH OF LABOUR HALTED?
Eric Hobsbawm
Ken Gill ■ Peter Carter ■ Kevin Halpin ■ Roger Murray
Digby Jacks ■ Mike Le Cornu ■ Royden Harrison
Stan Newens ■ Raymond Williams ■ Robin Blackburn
Tony Benn ■ Hilary Wainwright ■ Steve Jefferys
Jack Jones ■ Bob Wright ■ Jack Adams ■ Bernard Dix
In association with Marxism Today

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Teachers and Classes

A Marxist Analysis

KEVIN HARRIS

Drawing on experience at all levels in the school system, Kevin Harris argues that the schooling process within contemporary corporate capitalism is inimical to Education, while true Education, in turn is inimical to capitalism.

Routledge Education Books 0865 1 £4.95 **Paperback**

Women on the Line

RUTH CAVENDISH

Ruth Cavendish explores the relationship between sex, class and imperialism as reflected in the lives of women working on the assembly line of a large factory.

0987 9 £5.95 **Paperback**

Work, Women and the Labour Market

Edited by JACKIE WEST

The book presents through original articles a coherent overall picture of women's employment in contemporary British capitalism. For the first time it brings together concrete studies which show graphically how women's unequal position at work is shaped by the capital-labour relation and by women's place as housewives and mothers. *0970 4 £4.95* **Paperback**

ISBN Prefix: 0 7100

Routledge & Kegan Paul, 39 Store Street, London WC1

RKP

The Crisis in Historical Materialism

Class, Politics and Culture in Marxist Theory

Stanley Aronowitz, University of California

In this provocative new book, Aronowitz exposes the fundamental logical problems in Marxist theory with respect to nature, gender and race relations, the concept of class, and historical time. Starting with the premise that Marxism is the discourse of industrial societies — the conditions of which have largely been surpassed in advanced or late capitalist societies — Aronowitz argues that the standard Marxist conceptions of the relations of nature to value, of humans to nature, and of history to time, are no longer tenable. He contends that the centrality of *cultural* categories, as raised by the feminist, art, and ecology movements, among others, is one crucial difference for the late industrial world, demanding a break from the dominant tendencies within Marxism to reduce causality to its economic features. In this context, class formations are not considered an inevitable aspect of historical change but rather develop — in the course of struggles that may or *may not* be related to ownership and control of the means of production.

375 pages. 1981. Price £23.95
ISBN 0 03 059031 0. LC 81 5138

PRAEGER SPECIAL STUDIES

holt-saunders ltd publishers
1 St Anne's Road, Eastbourne, E. Sussex BN21 3UN

Socialism with a Human Face

The political economy of Britain in the 1980s

Michael Meacher, MP

Is there an alternative to the current political impasse? Michael Meacher describes here his personal vision of an alternative socialism, which has been defined by conditions in Britain today and is based primarily on industrial democracy and decentralisation of power. It is this new, radical approach which many believe will be the dominant influence in the next Labour Government. *Socialism with a Human Face* thus stands not just as a personal credo, but as the first articulate statement of socialist ideology since Anthony Crosland's *The Future of Socialism*.

Now available!

Hardback **£15.00**

The Politics of the Labour Party

Edited by Dennis Kavanagh

The internal problems of the Labour Party have been recently subjected to close public scrutiny. Changes in the party constitution, defections to the SDP and the adoption of new policies are all symptoms of transformation. Rather than concentrate on contemporary problems, the contributors to this book each take an issue of topical importance, but use it to analyse the longer-term tensions which lie behind the immediacy of day-to-day events. Contributors include the late Robert McKenzie, Philip Williams, Hugh Berrington, Colin Crouch, Ivor Crewe, Paul Whiteley, L. J. Sharpe, and Dennis Kavanagh.

Publication April 29th

Hardback **£12.95** Paperback **£4.95**

Political Communications

The General Election Campaign of 1979

Edited by Robert M. Worcester and Martin Harrop

The use of media is crucial to the political process since they provide the only real lines of communication between the elected and the elector, the politicians and the people. Using the 1979 General Election campaign as a specific case study, the contributors discuss the roles played by the advertisers, the politicians, the media, the pollsters and the psephologists to provide an illuminating study of political communications at work. Contributors include academics, MPs, journalists, a member of the ITN team and top men in the field of polls, PR, market research and advertising.

Publication April 29th

Hardback **£18.00**

George Allen & Unwin

George Allen & Unwin (Publishers) Ltd
PO Box 18 Park Lane Hemel Hempstead Herts HP2 4TE

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

alienation from any alternative to it, and is allied to a profoundly sceptical view of the social order and of all 'politics'. The socialist Left has not been able to fill this vacuum: this is its own failure and challenge.

Hobsbawm rightly suggests that the reasons for Labour's failure have much to do with the character of Labour's leadership. 'If we are to explain the stagnation or crisis', he said in his lecture, with reference to the sixties and later, 'we have to look at the Labour Party and the labour movement itself. The workers, and growing strata outside the manual workers, were looking to it for a lead and a policy. They did not get it. They got the Wilson years — and many of them lost faith and hope in the mass party of the working people' (p18).

This is an absolutely fundamental point, and it clearly does not only refer to this or that individual. The failure is that of a whole collective Right and Centre leadership, which was throughout in effective control of the Labour Party's politics in practice. As Steve Jefferys says, in one of the most incisive contributions to the volume, 'the last thirty years have proved, surely beyond doubt, the bankruptcy of labourism' (p112). Unless this 'bankruptcy' of a particular kind of orientation and leadership is placed in the foreground of analysis, socialists cannot properly assess what they are up against, or begin to address themselves seriously to what ought to be done about it. For the people who controlled the Labour Party during the Wilson years (and the Callaghan years) are the same sort of people who still control it — in fact, they are mostly the same people. Presumably, there is no need to argue here that the fact of Michael Foot being Leader of the Party does very little to reduce this hold of the Right and the Centre: he has long been part of that spectrum. Nor do the constitutional gains made by the Labour Left since the electoral defeat of Labour in May 1979 significantly affect, *in practice*, this Right and Centre predominance.

Many people hoped, in the two years following that electoral defeat, that the Labour Left would achieve a decisive breakthrough and dispossess the Right and Centre from its control of the Party; and Tony Benn's bid for the deputy leadership of the Party, unimportant though the office is in itself, was rightly taken to be the symbol of the Labour Left's challenge. His victory in that contest might have been a catalyst of change in the Labour Party's structure of power. But he lost; and his defeat provides a clear indication that the architects of Labour's decline will remain in control in the relevant future, however many verbal concessions they may have to make to the Left.

It is disconcerting to find Hobsbawm, in July 1981, dismissing these struggles as 'internal squabbles' (p168), and to hear him say, in the interview with Tony Benn in July 1980, that 'all people on the Left, whatever their views, had better concentrate their fire on their adversaries rather than on each other as they are in the habit of doing' (p99). This may sound good, but it ignores the uncomfortable fact that many Labour leaders are themselves the most determined 'adversaries' of the Left in the Labour Party.

The fact is that the basic demands of the Left deeply offend the fundamental convictions of most of the people who are likely to control the Labour Party's actual policies, should Labour find itself in government again. They hold their convictions with the same determination as the Left, often with much greater determination. They passionately believe that a radical extension of public ownership is an absurd and disastrous notion, electorally and in wider, policy terms as well; that unilateral disarmament, not to speak of 'neutralism', is dangerous nonsense; and that many other measures which are at the core of the Left's demands and aspirations are unrealistic and stupid. The people who make up the Right and the Centre in the higher reaches of the Labour Party are not Social Democrats, but they *are* social democrats. What they stand for is not a 'moderate' version of socialism: they stand for a capitalist alternative to it.

Hobsbawm insists that such people have a place in the Labour Party: 'both Right and Left, however embattled, belong to a broad movement and have a right to be there . . .' (p179). But this misses the real question, which is not the right of people to belong to the Labour Party, but what *position* they occupy in it. The 'broad church' argument, which Hobsbawm so readily endorses, fails to confront the fact of Right and Centre predominance, and the question of what can be done about it. Here, surely, is one crucial condition for the resumption of the 'forward march' which Hobsbawm wants. 'The case for socialism', he says, 'is as strong as ever, but it has to be argued in a new way, with much clearer proposals concerning the sort of society we want and what socialism can achieve, rather than a repetition of old slogans which, however valid, no longer carry the same conviction' (p177). So be it: but it cannot be expected that 'the case for socialism' will be argued with conviction by people who do not believe in it, or that they will want to implement policies designed to carry it forward in practice. Adequate political agencies are not everything; but they are nevertheless indispensable. There is no party which can at present effectively fulfil the many functions required of a socialist party, and there seems to me to be no reason to think that there is any party or grouping now in existence which can realistically be expected to fulfil them effectively in the future. This is a deplorable and dangerous situation; and how to change it ought, it seems to me, to be a central concern of people who want to advance the cause of socialism in Britain.

Ralph Miliband

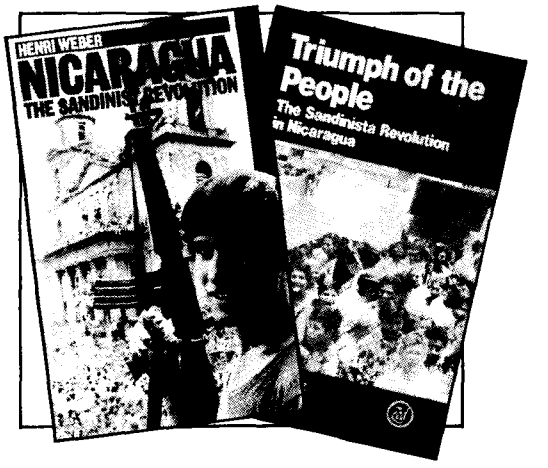
TRIUMPH OF THE PEOPLE
George Black
Zed Press 1981 pbk £5.50
ISBN 0 86232 036 4

NICARAGUA: THE SANDINISTA REVOLUTION
Henri Weber
Verso 1981 pbk £2.95
ISBN 86091 742 8

As the United States administration hots up its campaign to destabilise the two-year old Sandinista revolution, the struggle for power in neighbouring Guatemala and El Salvador, where left-wing guerrilla movements have been inspired by the Sandinistas' example, is soon likely to reach a climax. So it is a particularly opportune time for two books on the Nicaraguan revolution to hit the market.

The North American propaganda insists that since taking power in Nicaragua the Sandinistas have betrayed earlier promises to install democracy and are leading the country into the Soviet camp and towards a 'totalitarian' system. Both George Black and Henri Weber devote a refreshing amount of space to the question of whether Nicaragua is or is not democratic and make us realise just how ignorant and insidious the US campaign is.

On the issue of elections, the Sandinistas argue that the mass of the population voted for the revolution with their blood and that



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rather than hold elections the immediate priority is to develop basic education and health infrastructure which will lay the basis for any authentic future democracy.

Henri Weber too is sympathetic to the Nicaraguan government's position. Chapter six of his book is an excellent critical essay on the 'revolutionary democracy' which, Weber claims, exists in the country:

> 'A revolutionary democracy really exists in Nicaragua whatever its contradictions, excesses and limitations. In a country backward in every respect with no tradition of democracy, bled white for half a century by a ferocious dictatorship, a socialist revolution has brought forth a pluralist and open society in which democracy is more or less respected.'

Weber's discussion of the shortcomings of this revolutionary democracy is honest. The various mass organisations — the Sandinista trade unions, the Sandinista women's organisation, the Sandinista Defence Committees based on local communities, the Sandinista youth organisations — have allowed for increased popular participation. But these organisations are not, Weber argues, genuinely independent from the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). Their leaders are more often than not political appointees of the FSLN rather than representatives elected by the members of the organisations themselves. Weber praises the Sandinistas' tolerance in permitting the continued existence and freedom to operate of oppositional trade unions and political parties and says the FSLN's refusal to hold elections at the moment is totally understandable. But he adds that elections — which allow the population to choose between representatives of different political lines — must be part of any future authentic socialist democracy. Finally he argues that the FSLN must acknowledge much more openly its restrictions on democracy:

> 'Perhaps a better way is not possible under existing conditions but in that case it would be preferable to say so and get on with the job instead of turning weaknesses into virtues and presenting as a "higher form of democracy" what is manifestly an inferior form imposed by historical circumstances.'

Of course all these points are niceties which will not be grasped by those currently in charge of US foreign policy. The main fear of the Reagan administration is the way in which Nicaragua has become a beacon for socialists elsewhere in Latin America. The Sandinista revolution marked a significant turn-around for the popular movement in Latin America. After a decade of defeats it showed standing armies were not invincible and that revolutionaries could win state power through armed struggle.

The merit of George Black's well written and closely textured account is that it makes the reader realise what an immense political achievement this was. The author makes extensive use of his own taped interviews with participants in the struggle and of the Sandinista fighters' own accounts, making available to the English reader some of the richness of the political debate which was so central to the FSLN's own development.

The accounts of the FSLN's military masterstrokes — such as their Juan José Quezada operation in December 1974, when the FSLN kidnapped a number of foreign diplomats in Managua, a move which effectively announced their re-entrance into Nicaraguan politics after a period of isolation; the seizure of the National Palace in Managua in August 1978 by a Sandinista commando unit, the popularity of which convinced the FSLN to launch their September offensive; and the brilliant and audacious retreat from Managua by an FSLN unit along with 6,000 civilians in the final days of the war — are all excellently described.

In contrast Henri Weber's account of the revolutionary process is very thin indeed. 70% of the source material for Weber's book seems as if it comes from the French Tro-

Undercurrents MAGAZINE

"Carries vital news and views which you'll read nowhere else." —*Time Out*

"In their own way, and with their own particular markets, *Undercurrents* and *Spare Rib* are the only survivors/descendants of the 1960s underground press. It's worth a read at 60 pence." —*City Limits*

"In terms of continuing fixations, there's a new sex, (non-corporatist) technology, new politics, nuclear vigilence, plus all the bits of stuff and riff raff that doesn't quite fit elsewhere but should." —*New Musical Express*

IN OUR APRIL ISSUE: Radical architecture; Stuart Hood on TV and video in the 80s; feminist radio; technology strategies in Nepal; escape to a desert island; plus . . . Tony Allen's Diary of a Safety Valve, Paul Sieveking's Wierd Stuff Bulletin, and more news, views and reviews . . .

60p monthly (subscription £7 pa) from:
UNDERCURRENTS,
27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1R 0AT.

Publication 15 April

Early English Chamber Music
From the Middle Ages to Purcell
Ernst H Meyer
(edited by the author and Diana Poulton)
Originally published in 1946, this work rapidly established itself as the standard account of the richest period of English music composition as well as an outstanding piece of cultural history. This completely revised edition will appeal to early English music enthusiasts and to those with an interest in Marxist cultural analysis. *£15 cloth*

Publication 13 May

Shostakovich:
The Man and His Music
Christopher Norris (editor)
A collection of essays about the work of one of the twentieth century's most eminent composers; contributors include composers, music critics and performers. The essays cover the full range of Shostakovich's output — the symphonies, piano music, operas and songs — as well as aspects of form and ideology in his work. *£12.50 cloth*

Lawrence & Wishart
39 Museum Street, London WC1A 1LQ

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tyskist movement and it shows through in the analysis which tends to underestimate the specificity of the Nicaraguan experience. It is almost as if victory was always inevitable and that the Nicaraguan revolution is simply a test case which illustrates a universal truth. Weber's analysis of the FSLN is particularly weak. The insurrectional tendency of the FSLN effectively led moves to unify the organisation — split between prolonged popular war and proletarian tendencies — in 1978 and 1979 — and Weber dispenses with the myth that it was a social democratic tendency. But his own account of the factional struggle and the process of unity is occasionally inaccurate and generally leaves much to be desired.

It must be said too that the style of Weber's book is occasionally off-putting. Rebellions are always 'drowned in blood' never suppressed, workers always 'toil' never work. Finally although Weber has visited Nicaragua this is not immediately apparent from reading the book which is littered with geographical inaccuracies.

John Fantham

GIRLS, WIVES, FACTORY LIVES
Anna Pollert
Macmillan 1981 pbk £3.95
ISBN 0 333 29178 6

WOMEN, WHERE ARE YOUR JOBS GOING?
Haringey and Lewisham Women's Employment Projects
Pamphlet 50p

Over the past few months there have been a number of published studies which graphically describe the lives of working women. They all, inevitably and rightly, highlighted women's 'double workload'.

> 'The daily routine of most women (at the Churchman's factory in Bristol) began round 5.30 to 6 am to "do a bit of work". They then had to catch the bus and often wait for half an hour in case they missed it. Work started at 7.30 am prompt, but rather than risk being late many got in at 7 am for "a cup of tea and a fag". At 9.30 am there was a fiteen minute break for a quick bite and a cup of coffee. Lunch was between 12.30 pm and 1.30 pm, during which some stayed in the canteen, but many went over to Bedminster to do some shopping. Work "finished" at 4.30 pm, but of course started again. They shopped, caught the bus, got home, had a quick cup of tea, cooked the tea and did more housework. It was quite normal to have less than an hour's "free time", perhaps to watch television, before going to bed ready to get up the next day — and start again, the same old pattern.'

These studies of women workers are timely. They provide a convincing and much needed reminder of the context for demands by socialist feminists for a radical re-think of the alternative economic strategy. They demonstrate that the 'working-class' is not homogenous, but is, rather, sharply differentiated by the concerns and roles alloted to sex. Whether women work full time or part time outside the home, they also spend over 35 hours a week on household tasks, compared with their husbands' 10 hours a week. There is a very direct link between their oppression as women and their exploitation as workers.

The manifestation of this in the search for local part-time work (and homework) has been rehearsed elsewhere, as has the ghettoisation of women into a narrow band of low status jobs which frequently mirror the servicing, caring roles of women in the home (nurses, typists, food processing workers etc). The current studies supplement our understanding of these aspects of women's exploitation but their importance is in their exploration of the relationship between the sexual division of labour in the home, sexism and the sexual hierarchy at work.

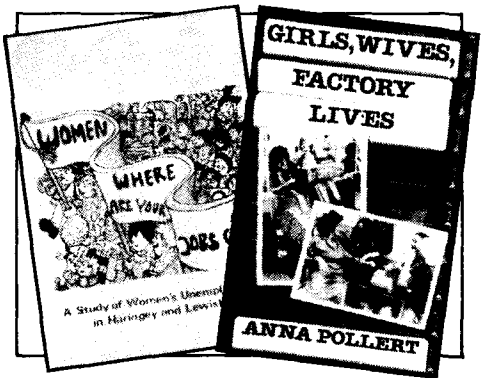
In their study of female unemployment, the Haringey and Lewisham Women's Employment Projects point out that the responsibilities of wife and mother also lead frequently to an experience of unemployment which is not generally recognised as such. The need to care for children during school holidays or elderly or sick relatives forces women frequently out of paid work which they want and need. For women, this constitutes unemployment which has generally been regarded as simply part of women's 'true role'. Employment strategies have, as they rightly say, so far not addressed themselves to this problem which, for many women, is a frequent and severe one.

The awareness of this 'true role' informs the views of the women at Churchman's in Anna Pollert's study. They felt they had a certain security as cheap labour — not just at work, but at home, too: 'if I was earning as much as (my husband) — he wouldn't feel he was supporting me — he'd be downgraded'.

As Anna Pollert points out, language, the visual arts, the mass media force women to see themselves as men see them — as sex objects, as wives, as mothers, as cooks. And it is this problem which women experience as workers; whether or not they actually work alongside men, their ideas about themselves as workers are dominated by what they think men think of them as workers. It is an ever present mirror which few men ever experience.

It is precisely this mirror which is evident in the operation of sexism as a controlling force in the workforce. The women in the factory would make jokes and sexual innuendo with male chargehands and the like and derived some enjoyment from these exchanges — but it was a way of keeping them in line. By colluding with male stereotypes of women as sex objects, they landed themselves open to sexist advances and confirmed their inferior status; so too, the older women who treated the male chargehands and managers with the intimacy of wives and mothers, colluding with the role of housewife, confirming their inferior status.

'Women's work' in most factories is effeminate to men without being feminine to women. The women at Churchman's were acutely aware of this, and this in turn led them to see more clearly the dehumanisation of the processes in which they were involved. 'Sexually the label "factory girl" did not give them as high a price in men's eyes as a "nice" job like nursing or typing, or a "glamorous" job where they had to look good. And they forced themselves to accept that they were at the bottom of the labour market, both in class and in sexual terms'. It meant that they looked not just to the daily



escape from work, but to a 'career' in marriage as a total alternative. But it also led to the idea that work is temporary, that one 'grafting' job is as good as another — leading to a high turnover and the inevitable marginalising of trade union organisation.

One of the problems with *Girls, Wives, Factory Lives* is that we learn about the position of women workers more from Ms Pollert's sharp and perceptive commentary than from the words of the women she interviews. Their statements serve to illustrate rather than illuminate. This is clearly not intended — much store is placed on allowing 'workers to speak for themselves' — but it is perhaps inevitable given that this is a work of sociology and the writer positions herself clearly on the far left. This is a reservation rather than a rebuttal. The book should be read by everyone concerned to understand the current debates about strategies for improving the lot of women at work.

Tess Woodcraft

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTES

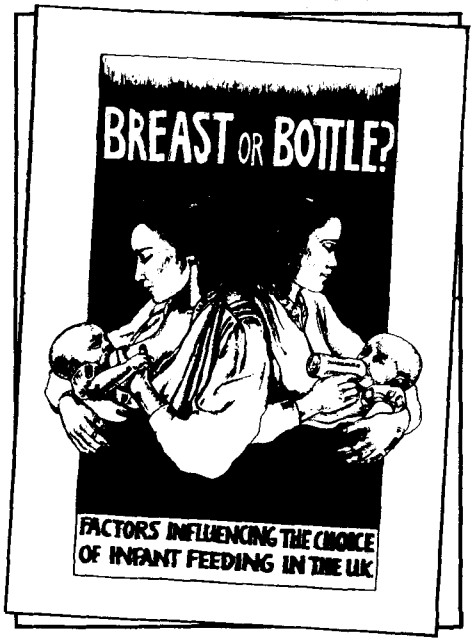
READERS' LETTERS

From the May issue, we will, for the first time, be printing a letters section in Marxism Today. Letters for publication in the May issue must be received at the editorial office by Tuesday 6 April, and be of no more than 250 words length.

BREAST OR BOTTLE?

Andy Chetley writes: This report published by War on Want documents nearly 1700 examples of marketing practices for infant feeding products in the UK which violate a voluntary international code approved by the World Health Assembly in 1981. Based on a survey conducted in September and October 1981, results were obtained from 98 communities in the UK, and primarily covered health centres, clinics, maternity wards and hospitals.

The report also outlines other measures that can be taken to improve the current infant feeding situation, such as better training for health workers; improved maternity leave and creche and nursing facilities at the workplace; more education on the benefits of breast feeding and the employment of



more community-based health workers to assist and advise mothers.

The report is priced at £1, and available from: War on Want, 467 Caledonian Road, London N7.

FAMILIES AGAINST THE BOMB

Josette Morgan writes: Would you carry and rear children only to have them destroyed in a nuclear holocaust? Mothers who feel that the risk to their own families is becoming greater and greater are going with their children to lobby Parliment on May 18 to protest about Cruise missiles and Trident.

Families Against the Bomb are a group of parents who wish to protect their children, not allow them to be made the victims of a nuclear power struggle. Our lobby of Parliament starts at 2.30 pm on Tuesday May 18 and will continue into the early evening. For further information please contact Maggie Weatherby on 01-340 2715 or Josette Morgan on 01-341 3969.

JEWISH SOCIALISTS GROUP

Dave Rosenberg writes: A two day conference on Jewish Socialist Perspectives for the 80s, attended by sixty people, was held in London recently by the Jewish Socialists Group.

The conference sought theoretical clarification on two central issues: raising socialist issues in the Jewish community and bringing forward Jewish/ethnic minority issues in the socialist movement.

For minority groups a major source of strength lies in the reclaiming of our history, as was shown by the success of the third talk, 'Jewish Women and Work in Manchester at the Turn of the Century'.

The JSG is organised through branches and support groups in major cities, and may be contacted: JSG BM3725, London WC1N 3XX.

UNIVERSITY STAFFS

John Kelly writes: The University Staffs Left Group, a Broad Left group in the Association of University Teachers (AUT), is holding its annual meeting on Saturday 24 April at Birmingham University. The one day meeting will discuss the newly formed Educational Alliance and the ways in which socialists can and should campaign for progressive policies in the whole of the higher education sector. The meeting is open to all and further details can be obtained from: Wilfred van der Will, Dept of German, University of Birmingham, Birmingham B15 2TT tel: 021-472 1301.

FOURTH IDEA BOOKSHOP APPEAL

Charlie Unsworth writes: The Fourth Idea is a non-profit making, co-operatively owned radical bookshop — one of the few in the north of England. Our premises were badly damaged by flooding over the Christmas period, and we now find ourselves having to move but lacking the necessary capital to do so, so we are appealing for donations and/or loans at reduced interest rates. Please send any offers to: The Fourth Idea Collective Ltd, 14 Southgate, Bradford 1, West Yorks.

Contributions to *Notes* (brief please) are welcome. We need copy as early as possible.

MARXISM TODAY CIRCULATION

Marxism Today is looking for a full-time circulation manager to supervise all aspects of our circulation. The job will involve dealing with our distributors, wholesalers and retail shops. Part of this can be done from the editorial office, but the job will entail a lot of travelling and field work throughout Britain. A key aspect of the work will be developing local groups to assist with circulation and promotion. Liaison with the Communist Party at all levels will be central to this. Candidates should be hard-working, well-organised, have plenty of initiative and be good at organising people. A current driving licence would be a considerable asset. The annual salary is approximately £5,400 per annum.

Apply in writing with statement of background and qualifications to: The Editor, Marxism Today, 16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY. The closing date for applications is 13 April, 1982.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Peter Katjavivi is a member of the Central Committee of SWAPO.
Peter Ball is a sports journalist on *Time Out.*
Henry Taylor is a university lecturer.
Nigel Fielding is the author of *The National Front.*
John Alderson is Chief Constable for Devon and Cornwall.
Martin Kettle writes for *New Society*
Sam Aaronovitch is the author of *The Road from Thatcherism*
Robert Young writes and broadcasts on science.
Christian Tyler is an editorial feature writer for the *Financial Times* and was until recently its Labour Editor.
Paul Bew is the co-author of *The State in Northern Ireland.*
Mary Harron is a freelance journalist.
Kevin Gough-Yates works in publishing.
Caroline Holder is a fashion designer.
Sheila Capstick is a snooker player.
Geoff Bell is the author of *The Protestants of Ulster.*
Ralph Miliband is the author of *The State in Capitalist Society* and *Parliamentary Socialism.*
John Fantham is a writer on Latin American affairs.
Tess Woodcraft is a researcher for NALGO.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WORLD WIDE TRAVEL IN '82

Specialist Tour Operator to
the Labour and Student Movements

AIR AND FERRY TICKETS ISSUED IMMEDIATELY
PACKAGE HOLIDAYS

THE FAR HORIZON

USA — CUBA — SOUTH AMERICA

Weekly departures via Miami to the USA and Havana with wide choice of optional programmes in the USA and Cuba. Also package holidays in Cuba via Madrid, and new facilities to Nicaragua, Mexico and other destinations in Latin America.

TRANS-SIBERIA TO CHINA AND JAPAN

Independent or group travel via trans-Siberian rail or air routes to Mongolia, Beijing, China or Japan, returning via HongKong or continuing to Australia or the West Coast. From £265.

ALGERIA — NORTH AND WEST AFRICA

Wide choice of spring and summer holidays in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Gambia and Senegal. For more information, phone/write Frank Norall.

SPECIALIST TRAVEL

We specialise in study tours and holidays with a purpose, particularly to the USSR and Eastern Europe. Phone/write Benedict Brouard for details.

RUSSIAN LANGUAGE COURSES IN USSR

3-12 weeks for all levels, spring, summer and autumn, in Moscow, Kiev, Leningrad, Kharkov etc.

STUDY TOURS

in education, art and architecture, ballet and theatre, sport and physical education, Russian life and language for schools, archaeology etc, throughout the western USSR, Georgia, central Asia and Siberia.

TRADE UNION GROUP HOLIDAYS

to the USSR and Eastern Europe, Italy, France, Spain and Greece in association with national Trade Union organisations. School group travel: in association with Sputnik and Intourist in the USSR, LUJ in France and world wide with partner organisations of BITEJ, with national TU organisations and WFTU, meeting fellow workers in every profession and trade (special rates for rail workers).

SUMMER BREAKS

YUGOSLAVIA two weeks holidays to Dubrovnik, Becice. From £175.

ITALY Rimini and Ravenna, plus low cost charter of yacht with crew to Yugoslavia and Greece. From Co-optourist of Ravenna.

RUMANIA cycling or touring with your own car from £95

BULGARIA Bargain mountain, city and seaside holidays

USSR 7 or 15 days youth tours to Moscow, Leningrad, Georgia, Ukraine etc. Special visits for May celebrations.

GDR lake and seaside holidays in July and August from £198

Also many other brochure holidays available worldwide. Phone/write Bob Allen and Adolpho Lopez for details.

Progressive Tours Ltd.
12 Porchester Place, Marble Arch, London W2 2BS
Telephone 01 262 1676 Telex 25135

'Holiday of a lifetime' in the USSR 30 April-14 May

- Moscow, Leningrad and two other cities
- 5 trade/professional groups — as guests of the AUCCTU (Soviet TUC)
- 5 exciting itineries: including reserved places in Red Square May 1st spectacular
- Experience also: **Soviet Trade Unions at work in a socialist society and the (beyond price) traditional warm Russian welcome.**
- Price £265 for 2 weeks 'Holidays of a Lifetime'
- A considerable saving on the normal £308 tour cost

Particulars: **the First Trade Union Country Club**, Plaw Hatch Hall, Sharpthorne, East Grinstead, Sussex. Telephone (STD 0342) 810373

See RUSSIA at it's best!

FROM £240 all inclusive 8-15 day holidays

SUN & SEA or CITY TOURS

Travel from coast to coast in the USSR on real value-for-money holidays at guaranteed prices and take a truly memorable holiday in a country that spans two continents.

New! 5-nights City Breaks in Moscow and/or Leningrad
New! Exclusive itineraries from Manchester

Air departures from LONDON and MANCHESTER from May 8. Phone, call or write (24 hour answer phone):
Intourist Moscow Limited ABTA Member
292 Regent St., London W1R 7PO. Tel: 01-631 1252

Please send me the Free INTOURIST Summer 82 Brochure

Name.....

Address.....

.....

INTOURIST - the International Tour People for the USSR

CENTRO TURISTICO STUDENTESCO

CTS LONDON

Youth and Student Travel Service

	o/w from		o/w from
Bologna	59.00	**Palermo**	50.00
Brindisi	59.00	**Pisa**	55.00
Genova	50.00	**Rome**	55.00
Milan	45.00	**Turin**	50.00
Naples	59.00	**Athens**	65.00

Also available cheap flights to Europe, Far East, South America, North America.

plus accommodation all over Europe

plus international student cards

plus discounted train tickets in Europe for people under 26.

Don't forget special groups discount. Adults welcome. Pop in today to CTS: 33 Windmill Street, London W1.
Telephones: 01-580 4554, 01-637 5601, 01-637 1648.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ETV

ETV announce the release in 16mm colour of the latest film by CND

TOGETHER WE CAN STOP THE BOMB

CND FILMS

It runs for 20 minutes
— hiring fee £10

With the recent People's March for Jobs it makes a timely programme

Peoples march for jobs
MAY 81
LIVERPOOL LONDON

Both these titles and hundreds of others can be hired from

EDUCATIONAL AND TELEVISION FILMS LTD
247a UPPER STREET, LONDON N1 1RU. TELEPHONE 01-226 2298

SEND TODAY FOR OUR NEW 1982 CATALOGUES (FEATURES AND DOCUMENTARIES)
(enclose cheque / PO for £1.50 to cover post and packing)

4 FILMS ON CHILE
'Companero'
Victor Jara Sings
Message From Chile
Patchworks of Santiago

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED